BEYOND SOIL AND BLOOD:

CURRICULUM AS COMMUNITY BUILDING IN

CONTEXTS OF PROFOUND HUMAN DIFFERENCE

By

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I have not traveled alone, and for that I am immensely grateful. My sister, Genyce, has told me again and again that I am writing the story that was given to me to tell, and that "what you know first stays with you" (MacLachlan, 1995, p. 20). These words have been a compass for me each time I have lost my way. And while this dissertation is about community, it is also a story that tells a good deal of who I am and who I am growing into. For this reason, it is easy for me to see that my life and my writing reflect the stamp of many whose lives are interwoven with mine. Thus, it is a great honor to recognize some of those who have cared for me, supported me, and encouraged me in my life and through the course of this writing project.

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Abstract: Our contemporary historical moment is characterized by social, political, economic, and educational complexities, as well as lived experiences of estrangement, isolation, insecurity, and distrust. Within this difficult context, conventional understandings of community which rely upon assimilation or exclusion are challenged and new imaginations of community building are needed to cultivate generative, nurturing, sustaining experiences of life together. My dissertation offers a theoretical exploration of the curriculum as a living ecosystem in which new conceptualizations of community building may emerge. Drawing upon poststructural feminism, autobiography, poetics, and aesthetics, I explore the complicated intersections of difference, embodiment, emergence, and relationality within the curriculum to reimagine the possibilities of building *the other community*, one inclusive of difference.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter Page

Chapter Page

Chapter Page

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure Page

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"Reality presents itself to the human mind...in the form of stories."
(Selden, 1989, in Quinn, 2001, p.7)

"What you know first stays with you." (MacLachlan, 1995, p. 20)

"What the best and wisest parent wants for his own child, that must the community want for all of its children. Any other ideal for our schools is narrow and unlovely; acted upon, it destroys our democracy." (Dewey, 1916, p. 3)

Complicated Stories: Autobiography and Curriculum

Once upon a time, when I was three years old, my parents, younger sister and I left the United States and sailed for six weeks across the Atlantic Ocean on a small ocean liner to reach Israel, a foreign country that would be our new home. Like me, Israel itself was young, a country still in its childhood in the late 1960s. Fifty or so years later, my memories of the time in Israel are fragments, moments in time, snapshots, much like the ones my parents captured on film. From our years in Israel, my parents have several small boxes of photos and some 8mm film reels that may stand as the most accurate

record of the trip across the ocean and the two years we lived in Israel. One small black and white photograph captures me and my sister on the sea voyage. My little sister and I are wearing the matching dresses my mother sewed for us, dark fabric with white round collars, and we are seated at a table in the ship's dining hall, a candid photograph capturing one small moment of our journey. Two young American children seated behind a table. White collars, white table cloths, our white plates empty, waiting for dinner to be served. This image of the two of us seated at the table waiting, pausing before the meal, seems to me a moment or space of anticipation, the *not yet* (Greene, 1988) of our journey to a new home, the *not yet* of our lives that will follow. It seems to me also to be a space of invitation, a question waiting for an answer, a silent prayer before a meal, a prayer for what will unfold from that moment forwards. This photograph, like all memories, invites me to turn inwards to listen to the stories of the past, to wonder at the simplicity of a journey almost 50 years ago, and to discover the surprising echoes that reverberate from the past into my present, where today as a mother, an educator, a school leader, and a scholar, I discover that my story is linked to others' journeys, the searching for one's home, one's people, and for experiences of community.

Madeline Grumet (1988) suggests that through autobiography "we work to remember, imagine, and realize ways of knowing and being that can span the chasm presently separating our public and private worlds" (p. xv). In this way, personal narratives, memory, and language make manifest the complexities within our singular lives and our collective lives. In understanding curriculum as lived experience, autobiographical work unearths individual stories, situates them as texts for critical examination, and preserves them for the next generation. Through autobiography, tensions are revealed, questions are asked,

and the ways in which we come to be and come to know are able to be examined (Pinar, 2004; Grumet,1988; Derrida, 1967; Kristeva, 2002). By joining the tradition of autobiographical research situated in curriculum theory (Pinar & Grumet, 1976), my autobiographical narratives provide an entry point to exploration and contextualizes my critical analysis of cultural, social, political, and curricular intersectionality. In this way, the narrative of the self comes to reveal "the fault lines at the borders of self and system" (Fowler, 2006, p. 17), and in exposing, exploring, and traversing these fault lines between personal lived experiences and the mechanisms of the world, new understandings can be formed, contributing to understandings, critiques and reimaginations of curriculum.

Autobiographical work is a continual stirring of the waters, and in that way, what seems to be the ongoing disruption of the smooth surface and the appearance of things, may in fact gradually reveal the poetry and mystery of our lives. Janet Miller (2005) suggests that "the autobiographical subject is in dialogue with her own process and archives of memory. The past is not a static repository of experience, but always engaged from the present moment, itself ever changing" (p. 15). Thus, my autobiography, examined from my contemporary historical, political, and social moment, points me to deep questions regarding the experiences of community, and being a stranger, the desire for belonging, and the complexities and incongruities of attempting to build community among others who may be different from me. As a teacher and school administrator, I understand that the questions that arise from my autobiography intersect the work of public education, and our collective efforts toward a curriculum that is both a complicated conversation and lived experience (Pinar & Grumet, 1976; Pinar, 2012), and serves the common good and our shared futures. In exploring curriculum as community building, I am drawing upon my own lived experiences

as well as my contextualized role as an educator and public-school administrator, recognizing that these various narratives, each situated in discrete times and places, give shape to my exploration and pursuit of an active praxis of our human experiences of being together.

Fragmented Stories: The Poetic and the Possible

My story begins in the Spring of 1968. With our few belongings packed in a six-foot square crate, my parents embarked on a kind of immigration, and relocated our family to a Kibbutz, a small agrarian community called Urim, located in the Negev Desert about 10 miles from the town of Beersheba. For the Israelis, for other Jews scattered across the globe through the diaspora, and for others like my parents who deeply valued their Judeo-Christian religious heritage, the birth of the nation of Israel was an exciting time, a time of promise, building, growth, and dreams of returning to a home that had not previously existed in this form. While some kibbutzim had been founded decades before statehood, others like the one we lived in, had sprung up across the country of Israel as experiments in collective living, small farming and manufacturing communities focused on building a nation. The Hebrew word *kibbutz* draws its meaning from the words for *gathering or clustering*, and even though the individual character of each kibbutz reflected diverse orientations, some Zionist, some socialist, some militaristic, some orthodox, and others secular, they all shared characteristics of intentional community life: shared housing, collective labor, common meals, communal care and education of the children, and a resignation of some self-contained individualism for the sake of the common life of the community.

Because I was a child, my own memories of the kibbutz are fragmented and disconnected from long narratives, leaving me instead with impressions, images and sensations of the experiences, the echoes of feelings and emotions and events, rather than a

complete story. This fragmentation and incompleteness of memory speaks to the ways in which autobiography cannot be taken at face value. According to Miller (2005) "in all remembering there is forgetting" (p. 27), and in this forgetful remembering new spaces may be created which open our stories beyond what we may believe they tell us. Such new spaces challenges and critique the "unproblematized recounting of what is taken to be the transparent, linear, and authoritative reality" (p. 51) of our own autobiographies. As I unpack my memories, my story of the kibbutz, I find this fragmentation rich with revelation and also surprising by what is concealed in the momentary images, sharp with detail, or impressionistic sensations that do not resolve themselves into full pictures or stories.

Operating from the framework of psychoanalysis, Julia Kristeva (2002) proposes that both memory and the language we use to describe our past experiences provide access to "the border states of the mind...the 'not yet' and the 'already no longer" (p. 7). The lure of stable stories, clear eyed truths, and unchangeable memories is enticing; however, poststructural feminism questions such a quest for certainty, suggesting an understanding of the self as an unfolding mystery filled with gaps, open spaces, unexplored lands, and contested territories. As such, they play with poetically evocative words to reference these generative spaces of instability and creative possibility. Judith Butler (2005) speaks to her "unselfknowingness" (p. 50) as the tension that exists when we seek to know ourselves through narrative, yet discover within ourselves unstoried spaces or spaces where our stories become a kind of fiction, challenging the veracity of the stories we tell about ourselves. The language of fragmentation and incompleteness can also be found in the theorizing of autobiography offered by Janet Miller (2005) in her notions of fluidity and openness, which resist the idea of a self-permanence and make room for ideas of the self that are changeable and pliable.

Other variations of this poetic language are evident in Kristeva's (2002) psychoanalytic perspective that foregrounds memory and the re-telling of the self and seeing revelations embedded in the language of the telling which allows us to recognize ourselves as strangers. In different ways, these ideas recognize our internal alterity as intimately connected to our sense of becoming, and linked theoretically to the inseparable relationship between freedom and responsibility (Ziarek, 2001), as we seek our own becoming and the becoming of others.

In challenging "traditional accounts of the unified, autonomous, and transparent self" (Peters & Burbules, 2004, p. 4-5), the disruptive language of a fragmented, porous, or incomplete self, rather than diminishing the self, speaks instead to the creative potential of our inner life and our life together (Miller, 2005). Poststructural feminism offers what seems to me to be a poetic humility and a generosity of possibility through self-un-knowing, through laying down of certainty, through an openness to the unknown stranger that resides within me and resides in those among whom I live. It is the embrace of mystery, serendipity (Wang, 2014), and the grace to discover what Elie Wiesel (2004) describes as something like a song, one that sings from the heart of story, a song that links us to the often painful and traumatic past, and a song that similarly ties us to the strength and redemptive hope of curriculum. In exploring the possibilities of curriculum as community building, the poetic reorientation offered through poststructural feminist discourse may provide new paths, hidden doors, and expectant discoveries, thereby enlarging understandings of where and how community may be forged, and the ways in which those who have found themselves strangers in the midst of community might discover new and generative places of belonging.

Remembered Stories: Dreaming of Community

In this light, what might my "self as witness" (Pinar, 2004, p.49), my memories, my autobiographical narrative of traveling to Israel reveal? I remember meals together and the long benches of the common tables in the dining hall. I remember standing in lines, gathering in groups, sitting in circles. I remember riding tractors in the green and golden fields, the slant of afternoon light, and the sweet mellow fragrance of ripe apricots, the fresh clean earthy taste of cucumbers eaten with a spoon, scooping out juicy spoonfuls from its own rind like an ice cream cone. I remember the sound of bees and the quick jerky scamper of the bright green lizards that seemed to scurry everywhere, inside and out. I remember my name sewn with blood-red thread into my clothing in short blocky stitches, Hebrew letters I had yet to learn, the letters that helped me collect my clothes from the communal laundry. I remember the children's house with large open windows where we spent most of our days, playing, singing, sleeping, eating, and bathing with the other children from the kibbutz, though I cannot remember the actual form of the events that filled my days. I remember falling asleep on the cots in the children's house, reaching across the narrow rows and touching the cool metal of the cot frame nearest mine, and feeling at home in a place that extended beyond the walls of our small house that stood beneath sparse trees some distance away in the dusty sand of the kibbutz grounds. I remember story, and song, and dance, and ritual, and ancient festivals all new to me, the cadence and rhythm of a foreign language easily slipping into my child's heart and mouth. My new world taking shape as my teacher read or sang, and drifting to sleep in a home that was not really my home, but feeling nonetheless enclosed, belonging, and in the arms of extended care.

It is inescapable to me now that my childhood memories play upon utopian imagery of community: the pastoral location, the romantic experiences of togetherness and belonging, the sense of extended family, and the feeling of unified purpose and collective labor. Such utopian dreams run deep in our Western mythology. Our sense of community is drawn from our earliest human experiences, the rich storehouses of ancient Greek democratic thought, Judeo-Christian religious traditions, and the American idealism epitomized in the Puritan John Winthrop's (1633) imagery of "a city on a hill," or of a city of refuge, forged through collective effort and the call to serve the common good. These diverse and rich symbolic traditions each permeate the ethos of community and in various ways give form to what we think *community* means and how we believe we should experience community. These symbolic traditions suggest a strong orientation towards Edenic community: a well ordered, peaceful, experience of harmonious order, complete acceptance, and brotherly human connection (Jung, 1959; Foucault, 1972; Derrida, 2000). In this Edenic context, the word *community* in its simplest form suggests "romantic notions of togetherness against the ravages of the world outside" (Chinnery, 2006, p. 330).

Thus, our earliest understanding of community as *togetherness* is oriented to place, and to the family groups that were connected to these locatable places. The physicality of a land that designated a place as well as the biological connections and laws of ownership that connected a group of people to their land, generated conceptions of community as rooted in soil, the familial land, as well as in the blood lines that connected individuals to others who shared claims to the physical land (Lyon, 2002). This early understanding of community as soil/place/familial land is tightly bound to the second understanding of community as blood/family/kinship. It is not surprising then that these two interconnected and defining

themes, *soil* and *blood*, emerge as the foundational metaphors that run through both common understandings and theoretical examinations of community.

The word *community*, laden as it is with connotations of warmth, belonging, identification, and home, is nevertheless complex, suggesting contradictory and often notably "differing conceptualizations of community" (Moore, 2014, p. 11). Theorists from multiple disciplines alternately understand community to be a locatable place, a social grouping, an experience, and a human condition, often linking conceptions of community to political, psychological, spiritual, and ontological explorations. Far from simplistic, the working out of community is a complicated human endeavor, one that wrestles with concepts of the self and agency, the potential of collective identities, profound[1] human diversity, and the possibility of building connections across human difference (Wang, 2014).

Stories of Loss

It is problematic and disorienting that the hope-filled romanticism of our collective Edenic notions of community stand in sharp contrast with the world we seem to find all around us. Our contemporary historical moment is characterized by threat, rupture, trauma, and uncertainty. Our personal, public, and professional lives are submerged in a historical moment characterized by globalization and the retaliatory pushback of nationalism and xenophobia; market-orientations and consumerism; experiences of immigration and refugee-ism; terrorism and commonplace violence; technologically manipulated identities; and other postmodern dysphoric experiences. It is understandable, therefore, that surrounded by this profound human difference, disconnection, and disorientation, that the language of grief and longing for a "lost community" (Lyon, 2002, p. 374) has emerged. As we find ourselves

[1] My intentional use of the word *profound* in relationship to difference speaks to a conceptualization of magnitude – that our perceptions of difference are substantive, complex, and evocative of depth and breadth.

further and further removed from our imagined *once upon a time* communities that were defined by geographic lines and bloodlines, we may identify a deep primordial longing for a community we believe we have lost. Such an awareness of loss may be poetically expressed through the Welsh word *hiraeth*, which communicates a deep homesickness or ardent yearning for a home to which one cannot return, a home which maybe never was, and the grief for the lost places of the past (Petro, 2012). Whatever emotions may be tied to this experience of homesickness, it is essential to remember that this language of a lost community in and of itself speaks to a kind of *Neverland*, a place that exists only in our cultural imagination, where we romanticize a harmonious, equitable, past expression of genuine community, a utopian home that never truly existed, but an expression of home that we mourn nevertheless. These dreams of a lost community somewhere in the past masks from view the pervasive history of sexism, racism, classism, as well as other social deformities, and may also create a "mask of innocence to hide or refuse to acknowledge one's involvement, one's complicity, with processes of domination" (Miller, 2010, p. 14). Thus, the homesickness that emerges, either from a romanticized home that we dream has been lost, or from the clear-eyed recognition that community has always been a fractured human project, drives us in various directions for comfort, some longing to recreate what we believe has been lost or forsaken, while others stand in the space of loss and exile and strive to imagine new homes and new roads to homecoming.

In my inquiry, the language of loss is an essential starting point for explorations into the possibilities of communities constructed out of human difference, as well as reimagined expressions of community that take into account the vast human and systemic complexities of our world. As traditional communities are reoriented away from comfortable norms and

move towards complicated communal spaces and collective experiences shaped by profound human diversity, how might our sense of loss and longing, our *hiraeth*, move us to engage anew the realities of our societal diversity shaped by our multiplying ethnic, racial, cultural, religious, gender, and sexual differences? Kristeva (2002) suggests, "we belong to a future humanity, and future humanity will be made up of foreigners trying to understand each other" (p. 252). Perhaps as we begin to recognize the strangeness within and without us, it is a timely endeavor to study the idea of a "community without community" (Derrida, 1997), an idea that challenges the exclusionary and narrow constraints of community as it is traditionally understood, and instead suggests a generative space of human engagement that is simultaneously an act of interrelationship while safeguarding difference. Beginning at the breaking point of traditional community, my inquiry considers what kind of human togetherness, or radical expressions of community might be discovered and might be built among profoundly diverse individuals when "sameness" can no longer offer us the desired bridge of community?

Stories of Crisis and Trauma

Linked closely to loss, experiences of crisis and trauma are other essential starting points for my examination of the possibilities of community. The pivotal document "A Nation at Risk" (1983) created the cultural metaphor of *schools in crisis*. While longstanding criticism of American education significantly predates this landmark document, the inflammatory language within this document forged the belief that public education was in crisis due to its competitive failure, its dysfunctional programming, and its systemic brokenness. Such ideology and language positions schools as sites of individual and collective trauma. The power of this crisis narrative and crisis language to frame the context

of public education cannot be underestimated. Three decades later the language is still potent. The Equity and Excellence Commission (2013) is a more recent example that highlights and extends the metaphoric power of the language found in that earlier document. In their report they extend the scope of the original crisis language and write, "in 1983, 'A Nation at Risk' famously spoke of the 'rising tide of mediocrity' that threatened our schools. Nearly 30 years later, the tide has come in - and we're drowning" (as cited in Simon, 2013). As such, the narrative of trauma cannot help but simultaneously speak to romanticized, yet nevertheless distorted dreams of a past when we occupied an uncontested political and economic dominance, to dreams of orderly patriarchal cultural norms, and dreams of a time prior to integration and immigration, all times when presumably we were not drowning.

In overreacting to the narratives of loss, crisis, and trauma, school reform has been tasked to restore power, structure, and order, to go back to the imagined "golden days" of the past. Decades of school reform have attempted to respond by layering regimes of accountability protocols in the form of rigid student and teacher measurement, pervasive externalized power, and intricate mechanisms of internal school auditing. This audit culture (Taubman, 2009) has created new and different but equally complex experiential traumas for the individuals living and being within these reform mechanisms. The decades of strain that have been experienced by all members of the education community have made strangers of our students, teachers, parents, and administrators. All members of the school community have been wedged apart as their lived experiences are governed by intensifying measures of surveillance. Both this "regime of power" (Foucault, 1975, p. 39) and the human diversification of educational communities have contributed to the community of strangers that is the public-school system in the United States.

Reaching beyond the internal narratives of public education, the imagery of natural disasters, warfare, violence, and intersubjective trauma are all too familiar, even ubiquitous, in the contemporary narrative of public education in the United States. A map of the United States could be littered with push-pins marking the schools that have been sites of school shootings, and around the globe more push-pins could mark the sites of humanitarian crises, many of which produce refugees and asylum seekers and whose children find their way into public schools in the US. According to the UN Refugee Agency's annual Global Trends study,

> War, violence and persecution have uprooted more men, women and children around the world than at any time" in the last 70 years. "The UN Refugee Agency's annual Global Trends study found that 65.6 million people were forcibly displaced worldwide at the end of 2016 – a total bigger than the population of the United Kingdom and about 300,000 more than last year…On average, 20 people were driven from their homes every minute last year, or one every three seconds. (Edwards, 2017)

Such large-scale humanitarian crises push the boundaries of human endurance, causing new magnitudes of suffering especially in the youngest survivors of trauma. Dr. M.K. Hamza, a neuropsychologist with the Syrian-American Medical Society (SAMS), created the term "human devastation syndrome" because he thought anything else was simply not sufficient to accurately describe the levels of horror experienced by the child survivors (Morely, 2017).

In neighborhoods that may appear closer to our own hometowns, like Newtown, Connecticut, where first-grade students and teachers were killed at the Sandy Hook Elementary by a young man with an assault rifle, the entire community continues to "[toil] through some form of post-traumatic stress" (Cox, 2013). In the six years since that

horrifying event, The *New York Times* reports that "there have been at least 239 school shootings nationwide. In those episodes, 438 people were shot, 138 of whom were killed" (Patel, 2018). Epidemic shootings in schools speak to an ongoing cultural narrative of violence and threat from within, and holds hands with our national fear of threats from without, narratives that undergird out cultural and political landscape since the terror attack that destroyed the Twin Towers in 2001. In the nearly two decades that have followed that unprecedented assault, the United States continues to live under the shadow of fear. Any new threat, at home or abroad, makes clear "spiritual, psychological and emotional scars exist that can be reopened" (Hamilton, 2002, p. 2).

Beyond these national narratives of trauma, the public schools across the United States have intimate knowledge of the individualized narratives of students who find themselves submerged in family traumas of drug and alcohol addiction, abuse, neglect, poverty, homelessness, joblessness, incarceration, and systemic imbalances in police violence towards people of color. The term *trauma* is wide-ranging and can be broadly defined, for according to Caruth (1996) trauma can be any "experience that is not fully assimilated as it occurs (p. 5, as cited in Pinar, 2012, p. 65). Given the pervasiveness of trauma experienced by students in the public education system, new protocols and strategies have been developed to support teachers in creating trauma-informed classrooms (McInerney & McKlindon, 2014). Maxine Greene (1993) stated it accurately, we have both a "consciousness of the plague and the need for healing" (p. 220).

Given these descriptions of public schools as traumatized, broken communities, it is disorienting to reflect upon the words of the influential educational philosopher, John Dewey (1916) who proposes in *Democracy and Education* that one of the chief aims of education is

to enable young people to "share in a common life" (p. 10). When considering the current reform agenda that focuses rigidly on academic skills, core subject content mastery, and meticulous accountability, as well as the trauma informing public education, Dewey's century old aim of cultivating a common life may in fact be questionable on one hand, and seen as an imperative on the other. Dewey's aim of sharing in a common life is a question worth wrestling with in our current educational moment. If curriculum were to renew its attentiveness to students' ability to participate in some form of communal existence, how might that communal experience be reimagined? How could the traumatized *school in crisis* engage with the strangers around them? How could these strangers reimagine their togetherness? How could new experiences of the common life, of belonging, be explored in a radically different understanding of community?

Stories of Those Not Like Us

When I return to my autobiographical narrative and remember myself as a young child in a foreign land, surrounded by a foreign language, among those that I did not physically resemble, and who had orientations to life and worldviews fundamentally unlike the western culture I had previously known, I am nevertheless keenly aware of my own sense of community and belonging. Miller (2005) states that both autobiography and curricula are "sites of permanent openness and resignifiability" (p. 219), thus might not my story and the site of the classroom intersect in unforeseeable ways and point to possibilities of reimagining community among students different from one another and different from us as educators? Might the tension found within my autobiographical experience of difference, yet belonging, open a space in which to consider the multiplicity of ways in which curriculum as community building might be reimagined, repurposed, redesigned, or renamed?

Madeline Grumet (1988) suggests that "we need to find out how to teach those who are not like us" (p. 162), and perhaps now, three decades later, her challenge is all the more relevant. In the decades since Grumet's challenge, significant scholarship in the areas of critical theory, critical race theory, and multicultural education has proposed ideas and strategies to engage the profound human difference within educational contexts. Lisa Delpit (1995) suggests that we cannot overlook the embedded social, cultural, political, and economic imbalances that are endemic to the work of the classroom. Likewise, critical race theorist Gloria Ladson-Billings (1994) frames the imperative for teachers to engage in culturally relevant teaching; and multicultural scholar Geneva Gay (2010) articulates the relationality between students' culture and their learning and the need to respond to the diversity of students in the classroom. Critical theorists such as these acknowledge the intersectionality and complexity of the profound human difference that exists within public education, and in response, across the United States, teachers are attempting to meet the social, linguistic, cultural, political, and economic changes of the children that come to school each day. In acknowledging the tensions, traumas, and stresses of these differences, felt by teachers and students alike, it is easy to affirm the words of curriculum scholar, William Pinar (2012) who bluntly states, "we are teaching in a state of emergency" (p.72). Thus, at our present nexus of social, political, and technological change, it is imperative to examine curriculum anew, at a time when we no longer readily encounter experiences of traditional community in our schools and classrooms due to our submersion in profound human difference, and experiential contexts framed by crisis and trauma. Miller (2005) tells us that at the "intersections of the political, the historical, the autobiographical" (p.62) is where curriculum work exists. Curriculum, after the reconceptualization of curriculum, is

broadly defined as both lived experience (Pinar & Grumet, 1967) and "a complicated conversation" (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery & Taubman, 1995, p. 848) in which teachers, students, subjects, history, and society speak to one another. All can participate in such a conversation that is community building through dynamic interactions within the self and with the other. As teachers, students, and curriculum are challenged by our perceptions and experiences of fragmentation and separation, it behooves us to reimagine the work of building community while embracing difference within our educational spaces.

Dissertation Outline

The chapters that follow offer an interdisciplinary examination of community as situated within experiences of profound human otherness, and suggests the possibility of reimagining curriculum as community building. It will not be my aim to attempt a unification of these various interdisciplinary theoretical ideas, for it may not be possible that they can be neatly woven together; instead my aim will be to use specific aspects of various scholars' works as individual threads, perhaps each imagined with a unique texture or color, and from them create a new weaving – a textile that remains a complex web of intersections, suggesting new patterns or designs that may illustrate or depict a reimagining of community. As such, I draw widely from many sources, integrating not only their theoretical constructs but also the play of metaphors, imagery, language, and poetic explorations found in these texts, using them as purposeful spaces in which our unknowable selves (Miller, 2005), alone and together, may be discovered and reimagined.

I draw inspiration for composing portions of my writing as metaphoric by drawing upon an examination of poetics and the deconstructive play suggested by Jacques Derrida, who explores the contested yet generative spaces often hidden within seemingly transparent

language. It is useful in this intersection of ideas to understand poetic work as a "defamiliarizing" act of revealing, one that "discloses experiences ordinarily never seen" (Greene, 1988, p. 13).

Deconstruction, taken as a companion and a counterpoint to poetics, works to scrutinizes the relationship between language and the ideas or objects they represent, and proposes a fundamental rupture of absolute meaning (Derrida, 1967/2000). Rather than a coherent, orderly, reliable structure of language that communicates the perception of truth by explicitly and unambiguously linking signs to ideas and objects, Derrida argues that the signifier and signified exist in multiplicities of meaning, such that what remains is a system of signification that exists in infinite possibility, infinite openness, infinite play. In this way, the creative potential of deconstruction engages the imagination through its endless "power to illuminate" (Derrida, 1967 p. 5). As I draw upon poetics and acts of deconstruction, I find a space of freedom that allows for both the surface and the hidden possibilities of texts and the textile I am weaving, and I am allowed the freedom to create, resist, twist, and reweave various threads, thus playing, interrogating, and reimagining new complex webs of meaning.

The lines of my inquiry also draw upon Foucault's notion of making connections between the visible and the invisible. Foucault (1975) offers a useful understanding of this constitutive arrangement, my new web of meaning, by explaining that in bringing together and establishing a collection of source data, all of the pieces are "brought together and made visible…this task consists rather in making all these discourses visible in their strategic connections than in constituting them as unities" (p. 38). While Foucault was pursuing a task different than my explorations here, my inquiry is nevertheless dependent upon the idea he puts forward – that making visible and making connections is the imperative, not that they

come together as a seamless whole, but instead that they suggest new narratives and new interweaving. I suggest that these new narratives may offer conceptualizations of ethical relationships within a community of strangers that tell a story very different from the prevailing myths of schools, as sites of crisis, loss, and trauma; and tell a story different from the homesickness for a dreamed Edenic community to which we must endeavor to return. These new narratives propose curriculum as community building in contexts that embrace profound human difference.

The following six chapters are simultaneously autobiographical and theoretically grounded and in them I explore "the relations between academic knowledge and life history in the interest of self-understanding and social reconstruction" (Pinar, 2012, p. 44) to reimagine curriculum as community building. While the central thread of my exploration is poststructural feminism, I also weave together other theoretical lenses such as poststructural philosophy (and reinterpret it), poetics, aesthetics, existentialist thought, and autobiography. Working through various stories of community, conceptualizations of difference and being together as strangers, explorations of embodiment as curricular openings within spaces of emergence, my aim is to examine how we might explore relationality, and perhaps come to live well together, especially in our educational spaces and endeavors.

Scattered throughout the following chapters are brief autobiographical narratives, which I use as additional threads, to provide, contextualization, juxtaposition, and referential narratives, adding shape, texture, and detail to the new curricular web which is the aim of my inquiry. Taken together, my autobiographical narratives and my theoretical inquiry seeks to benefit our collective and communal lives, especially those portions of our lives we

experience in education, and to explore how new understandings or reimaginations of curriculum as community building may promote our community yet come (Derrida, 1992).

In chapter two, I will explore the multiple and intersecting stories of community. Rather than adopting the fiction of a linear historical narrative of community, I choose instead to explore various ideas of community through the anchoring metaphors of *soil* and *blood* because they allow me to explore and play with recursive ideas and resist "history" as an authoritarian, singular, and progressive narrative. I will describe some of our notions of community as they are framed socially, politically, geographically, and experientially. Examining these multiple, complex, and sometimes contradictory stories of community, I disrupt the linear narrative of community, one that seems to begin with stories of a harmonious organized community that slowly devolves and collapses, a narrative that implies a beginning and an ending. By orienting this exploration upon metaphors of *soil* and *blood*, I draw upon the poetic, in which metaphor "does not offer us empirical or documentary truth, but enables us to know in unique ways" (Greene (1988, p. 131), such that the play of language and poetic vision may expand our ways of knowing and make visible human realities that were previously hidden from view. Leggo (2018) contends that the poetic potential is good for the realm of the academy, because "a poem reminds us new stories and new truths are possible" and "a poem reminds us to enter mystery, to wander for wonder, to seek the way into the labyrinth, to embrace paradox and ambiguity. A poem reminds us we are all in process, all the time" (p. 92-93). Through the metaphors of *soil* and *blood*, I trace the recursive expressions of community that extend beyond narrowly framed conceptualizations of community, as well as engage expansive perspectives that describe other forms of human kinships that allow for an openness to the other. In so doing, I

consider a multiplicity of perspectives that lead to the central question of this dissertation: what kind of human togetherness can be found when conformity, or reason, or discourse can no longer build the desired bridge of community?

In chapter three, I will expand my examination of community and consider various ways in which we might conceptualize what Young (1990) describes as "being together as strangers" (as cited in Abowitz, 1999, p. 147) and the complex possibilities of "community without consensus" (Miller, 2010), an expression of community that embraces profound human difference and resists assimilating forces. For my exploration, I interweave a multiplicity of perspectives in order to make visible my central concern of difference, and the complicated role of difference within community. To examine human difference, I draw upon the evocative poetic language of otherness and strangeness, as well as the ways in which poststructural feminists play with the language of fragmentation, fragility, transformation, imagination, and revolt as conceptualizations of the self as a stranger. Through this rich poetic language of self-changeability and inner strangeness, I explore the doorway that is opened by these feminist explorations and consider the interconnections between inner strangeness and broader human difference, alterity, and otherness. Such an exploration draws upon the recognition that "in feminist discourse...the essentialized understanding of the self in challenged" (Wang, 2004, p.3) and that by acknowledging a complicated self, one may inhabit a compassionate space where welcoming otherness, strangeness, and difference becomes possible. In my consideration of the welcoming of others, I will also play with Derrida's (2000) deconstructive analysis of hospitality, the radical openness to the other, and the paradox and tensions that emerge in the im/possibility of hospitality. I respond to the challenges of Derrida's embattled host, and juxtapose a

generative possibility of hospitality that may be found in the role of the hostess, the maternal, and her "economy of gifts".

I continue in chapter four to expand upon this idea of the hostess by drawing upon feminist and womanist examination of the female body, and the ways in which the maternal body can play hostess, thus suggesting sustainable imaginings for a hospitality constructed not on the patriarchal law, but on the feminine and maternal works of the body, or what Hongyu Wang (2004) phrases as the "mother-world of implicit link" (p.13), or what in schools may be seen as the "gift economy of teachers and students" (Peters & Burbules, 2004, p.49). These feminine and maternal constructions may offer creative frameworks for understanding the surprise of unanticipated guests, the invitation to strangers, and the welcoming of otherness. I continue my exploration by drawing upon feminist thought and the work of curriculum historian, Petra Munro Hendry (2011), and explore the engendering of curriculum and the body as a site of knowing, suggesting that the body is also the site wherein community building can be reimagined. By exploring the poetic spaces of the body, I conceptualize an embodied work of community building which can be internalized, received, and shared. Such an approach draws upon the power of the poetic to make visible that which is historically unseen through juxtaposing that which we think we know with that which is hidden or unexpected. According to Janet Miller (2005), juxtaposition "provokes viewers and readers to make associations across categorical, discursive, historical and stylistic boundaries - associations not intended or sanctioned by the interests that contrast and require such boundaries" (p. 133). By examining the work of the body as a new space for community building, I work to shift the focus from systemic efforts of community building

to interconnected experiences of otherness, allowing for the exploration and experience of compassion and responsibility.

Chapter five expands upon the poetic theorizing of the body and turns the focus towards emergence in time and space. In this chapter I will consider the possibilities of encountering a different kind of community by examining emergence, as lived experiences in time and in making time, as well as the ways in which making time is located within what curriculum scholar, Brian Casemore (2008) calls the demands of place - the ways in which our lived experience is framed by definable contexts and spaces. In response to narratives of estrangement, exile, and trauma, the exploration of time and space suggest new territories for the emergence of communities of difference. As in my earlier chapters, to consider the intersectionality of emergence in time and place, I again draw upon multiple perspectives and the poetic. Through the hermeneutic theorizing of David Jardine (2012) I investigate time, and play with his idea of the worthwhile, the whiling that has worth, as an intentional and purposeful acknowledgement and engagement with time. To extend this concept, I draw upon Judeo-Christian narratives and rituals of time-keeping and time-making which intersect the observation of the sacred. Examining religious practices in this way may help illustrate how time and space serve as sites of embodied emergence, opening temporality to exploration and intentionality. For Jardine, engaging time is an act of intentional whiling, thus "t*o be* worthy of while means not being disconnected and fragmented and distanced...but to be lived with" (p. 175). Drawing upon his idea, I suggest that time and the uses of time are interwoven with understandings of spaces of presence, absence, and proximity, all of which are lived ontological moments of time. I will explore the metaphor of *the table* as a ritualized space of emergence which may lead to conceptualizations and expressions of

nourishment, communion, companionship, and engagement with the other. The metaphor of the table explores the possibility of encounter and emergence by engaging the temporal, the spatial, and the possibility of relationality (Wang, 2009).

In chapter six I continue my weaving, considering relationality and the possibility of imagining curriculum as community building. The education philosopher, Gert Biesta (2004) suggests that the problem with the community of difference "is that it cannot be brought into existence in any deliberate or technical way," (p. 320). In taking up this problem, I consider the ways in which curriculum as community building might emerge outside of systems, such that strangers could reimagine their togetherness through relationality. I begin by considering Martin Buber's (1937) theorizing of "I and Thou," and the ways in which perceptions and engagements with others act as unifying or fragmenting experiences. These considerations draw upon a conceptualization of nonviolence in education found not in power struggles but in the transformation of relationships and creative ways of engaging within systems of oppression. In so doing, I suggest that what becomes possible is a transformation of the self and a transformation of the perceptions of the other, and together they reimagine the nature of relationship. Biesta (2004) suggests that in the "community of those who have nothing in common" (p. 310) the goal of community is not commonality but instead experiences of compassion and responsibility. I propose that the invitation to relationality draws upon frameworks of responsibility and compassion which are the embodied work of curriculum as community building; that we come to the possibility of compassion and responsibility through the reciprocal work of the body in lived experiences which are situated in time and place and allow for relational engagement of the stranger within ourselves and in others.

In the final chapter I endeavor to describe my reimagining of curriculum as community building. The complex, interconnected threads of my weaving lead to a waypoint that is neither a destination, nor a return home, but a place of temporary rest before the journey continues. Having drawn deeply on the poetic throughout my theoretical exploration, the final chapter is an evocative snapshot of transformational relationships, momentarily capturing the progress of four threads: teacher and student, the text and story, the classroom and the school building, and the school leader. Following this snapshot, I reflect upon my own transformation and the labor of invitation. In tracing this unfolding story of community, my hope is that through the lived experience and complicated conversation which is the curriculum that we may discover new spaces for life together.

Summary

My theoretical exploration emerges at a time when both the manifestations of conformity and estrangement within education are being debated alongside our contemporary American moment of political, cultural, and social unrest. As the specters of intolerance, prejudice, hatred, fear, xenophobia, and self-preservation are being revealed, there are corresponding social, cultural, and political movements towards resistance and nonviolent social action and protest. The rise of these demonstrations for peace, dignity, respect, and responsibility speak to a renewed national narrative that is mobilizing to challenge homogenizing and exclusionary visions for the future. Clearly the tensions of our time stand in sharp and vivid contrast and acknowledge not only our own desires and expectations for experiences of community, but the imperative to simultaneously acknowledge our responsibility "to those who each lack the protection of belonging" (Chinnery, 2006, p. 332). My theoretical exploration centers upon curriculum as lived experiences of body, time,

space, place, emergence, relationality, and difference in a complicated conversation which explores the possibilities for human interconnectedness and preserves the dignity of alterity. I suggest that through the works of the body we may all participate as community builders through our ability to engage in reimagined curricular spaces in which our own strangeness might be interwoven with the other.

Some years ago, Maxine Greene (1995), stated that "our obligation today is to find ways of enabling the young to find their voices, to open their spaces, to reclaim their histories in all their variety and discontinuity" (p.120). For those who share this sense of burden for our young, our shared futures, and the common good, I hope my theoretical exploration responds to this challenge and contributes to the field of curriculum studies by examining the possibility of curriculum as community building found within contexts of profound human difference.

CHAPTER II

THE STORIES OF COMMUNITY

"Home is the expectancy of familiar things, the places, people, and the movement of time that in their way are ours." (Brownell, 1953, p. 77).

"The human heart is the first home of democracy." Williams (2004, p. 83)

"There is something profoundly misleading if the account of modernity is given as a progress of inclusion without paying attention to the shadow narrative of exclusion." (Volf, 1996, p. 60)

Knit Together as One Man

I begin the story of community by returning to John Winthrop's 1633 sermon, which I mentioned briefly in chapter one, in order to draw attention to the vividly poetic and romanticized language of "a city on a hill," which he uses to describe his imagination of what will become the United States, the imagined communal life and the collective work that he believes will stand as a symbolic light in the darkness. The poetic language and symbolism Winthrop employs is meant to stir the imagination of his audience and draws upon foundational Judeo-Christian language, light emerging from darkness, found in both the book of Isaiah and the gospel of John, and it is Winthrop's carefully crafted

language that becomes essential in giving shape to the founding ideology of what would become the United States. I acknowledge that there are earlier examples of these community ideals, as well as other examples that frame community in other "American" terms. However, rather than seeking the origin of these ideals, in choosing to reflect upon Winthrop's sermon I am able to draw attention to the crafting of language and the crafting of story by this Puritan founding father and the ways in which it has contributed to our understanding of community in the United States.

Winthrop's narrative is situated in a contested historical context, part of the complex line of colonialism that prioritizes certain stories while silencing others. Nevertheless, in order to be attentive to Winthrop's language in his sermon, I must situate him in a storied space of his own, one that allows him a momentary space decontextualized from the sweep of colonialism, and allows him to be seen as just one man, in the center of his life, attempting to put words to his lived experience, his story.

Winthrop is a man who has left the land of his birth. Standing on the deck of a ship and speaking to the others like him, men, women, families who have journeyed to a new land to establish new lives, the hopeful emergence of new light out of their past darkness. Because my imagination is stirred by his words, and we are meant to be stirred by the poetic, I take history, his/story, and add to it my imagination of the man and his lived experience. I imagine him tired but resolute, calling out above the sound of the wind and waves to the other tired travelers hopefully looking for the shores of their new home and land. Raising his voice, Winthrop (1633) shouts,

> we must be knit together in this work as one man, we must entertain each other in brotherly affection, we must be willing to abridge our selves of our superfluities

> for the supply of others' necessities. We must uphold a familiar commerce together in all meekness, gentleness, patience and liberality. We must delight in each other, make others' conditions our own, rejoice together, mourn together, labor, and suffer together, always having before our eyes our commission and community in the work, our community as members of the same body. (p. 1)

These are important words, artfully chosen, to tell a story, to shape a way of thinking. Winthrop looks ahead to the human trials that must surely lie ahead for these strangers in their new land, and calls these people into a symbolic unity, a community, a body, that when joined rightly together will be empowered and enabled to support the needs of the one and the needs of the many. This metaphor of the community living and acting as a single unified body, working in harmony, continues to thread itself through our contemporary understanding of what it means to be a community. But Winthrop's language is not simple; it includes deeply complex directives to construct his framework of community. Community is simultaneously a thing that is an experience, a thing that is a collective work, and a thing that is a body. As I attempt to tell some of the story of community in this chapter, it is important to acknowledge the poetic strength and intersectionality of Winthrop's language, for the word *community* as it moves through time and place continues to come to us heavy with contested histories, complex connotations, and implications for our experiences of belonging, shared labor, and future possibility of what our collective human experiences may become.

The Story of Community: *Terra Nullius*

It is important from the outset to acknowledge a kind of fiction in the story of community that I will be telling. The idea of a *once upon a time* origin narrative of

community is alluring, to be able to present a precise demarcation of when community begins - once there was nothing, now there is something - but it is a myth. This notion of *terra nullius* or "nobody's land," a territory unclaimed and unmapped, establishes the illusion of a clean slate from which things orderly and rightful emerge. *Terra nullius* suggests a map unmarked, without territorial lines and without human inscription, thus in the laying claim to the land, it infringes upon no one, supplants no one, dispossess no one, just as Winthrop's narrative, taken out of context, erases the claims to homeland established by Native American communities.

Many fictional and historical narratives draw upon similar literary devices at the beginning of their telling because it turns our eyes with full attention to the story at hand, rather than be concerned with the possibilities of stories that may already be in progress, or may lay claim to the land, or be inscribed upon the land in ways we cannot see, do not desire to see, or understand as part of our story - the story we want to tell. By recognizing and pushing back against *terra nullius*, I am reminded of the often-invisible imperialism of history that picks up only specific threads of stories, and in so doing, eradicates or silences the telling of many other stories. The curriculum historian, Petra Munro Hendry (2011), clarifies[2] a feminist poststructural reading of history, as a task to "disrupt the search for origins," and in so doing acknowledge narratives "so interconnected that they cannot be disentangled" (p. 8). Thus, I begin my story of community disclosing that I can only see in part, and tell only in part, and that what I choose to tell serves the story I wish to unfold. Such a telling aligns with the incomplete,

[2] I choose to resist the customary past-tense engagement with literature. Electing to employ the present-tense allows me to situate myself and my readers in a complicated conversation with the literature. Where necessary, I acknowledge the historical contexts in which specific writers or texts are situated.

partial, and transitory nature of historical rememberings articulated by Janet Miller (2010), who problematizes the notion of telling "one history" (p. 8) as an impossible endeavor.

Through my metaphor of *terra nullius* and my contesting of nobody's land, perhaps there is a kind of linkage with both Derrida (1972/1981) and Foucault (1977/1995) who propose that language and the meaning of ideas as they are manifested in language exist in a kind of temporal and historical flux. They suggest that words are containers of fluid meanings that respond to the changeable times, places, and peoples that employ them. In this way, language is both a static time capsule containing narrowly understood ideas of specific times and places, as well as an evolutionary growing organism that consumes ideas and incorporates them into new forms, new ideas, and new meanings. Thus, the word *community,* is a moving target, a signifier with multiple meanings, changeable, as people have given various interpretations to the word through specific times and places. And if the idea of *community* is expanded even further, beyond a linguistic construct, beyond a word with variable meanings, to an understanding of *community* as a human work, or a phenomenon, or an embodied practice, it is likewise important to understand that just like words, "rituals, and customs are culturally, historically, and politically inscribed with/in lived historical and social constructions and interpretations of memories" (Moon, 2012, p. 4). In this way neither the word *community*, nor our human efforts at experiencing community, building community, or living community may ever be seen as something to be narrowly or rigidly defined,

described, or delineated. While we[3] may think we know what community is, it is always in an ongoing process of change.

Assuredly, the word *community* carries connotations of warmth, belonging, identification, place, and home. Yet as I have described, beyond these surface ideas, there exist deeply complex and often contradictory theories of community as a locatable place, a social grouping, a lived experience, or a human condition. In this way, the working out, or the practices, of community are a complicated human endeavor, one that depends upon often contradictory ideas of the self and identity, the possibilities of collective identities, and the challenges of profound human diversity and of those that we see as strangers, and others, and foreigners to our lived experiences. This chapter presents something of a story of community, both a historical and a cultural overview of our conceptualizations of community, drawing attention to the internal tensions and contradictions that exist, in order to lay a foundation for my exploration of curriculum as community building.

Not unlike John Winthrop's representation of community which draws upon the symbolism of being members of one body, the following exploration of community plays with the evocative metaphors of *soil* and *blood*. I will interweave the various threads that contribute to the story of community starting with the often-romanticized narratives of what we imagine as a traditional community, then consider the complexities of communities constructed around critical engagement or engagements of care, and finally explore experimental postmodern/poststructural communities that emerge at what appears

[3] Throughout my theoretical exploration I frequently employ the first-person plural pronoun, *we*, to illuminate the (complicated) conversation that is curriculum. The intentional use of *we* serves as a continual invitation to engage in the conversation.

to be the rupture of traditional notions of community and which strive to exist without consensus.

In the Beginning: An Autobiographical Story

Just as it is enticing to imagine that the story of community has a beginning, that there was nothing then something, that allows for a narrative of "in the beginning," I am drawn to imagine that I also have a story of community. Thus, moving forward in the telling of the story of community, I must also tell a little more of my own story.

A few years after we left what I remember as an Edenic kibbutz in Israel and returned to the United States, and by the time I started the third grade, my nomadic parents had moved our family, now with another baby sister, four more times before settling permanently in Oklahoma, and it was in Oklahoma that my formal public schooling began. In many ways, my memories of my earliest years of elementary school carried forward the romantic notions community I had experienced in Israel, but now in new manifestations. My own mother was my kindergarten teacher, and no matter how much she wanted me to call her Mrs. Griffin when we were at school, I always called her "Mommy." Surely having my mother for my teacher is the epitome of home and belonging coming to school with me each day. There was no separation between the community and connection of home and that of the classroom.

But beyond kindergarten, when I had other teachers, other memories of my early elementary schooling also spoke to me of home and the comfortable belonging and romantic expressions of community. I remember stories read aloud to us while we sat in circles or laid on the carpet, sometimes dozing off to sleep. I remember orange juice and graham crackers as an afternoon snack, and play centers with dishes and plastic food.

There were corners of the room with pillows and soft mats, and also the bodiliness of holding hands with other students, hugging a teacher, crawling under desks, sitting outside in the grass, the sweaty closeness of lining up to come inside and feeling the intimate nearness of other elementary students standing in front and behind me, the brush of someone's hair, the press of someone's arm or shoulder or chest, and the collective semi-circle of hand-washing in the hall before lunch in the cafeteria. I remember pretty, kind young teachers, open tubs of crayons of every color, stirring water into a watercolor palette with thick brushes, glue and tape and scissors, the seasons and holidays and weather recorded on wall calendars and bulletin boards in colored-paper cut-outs. I remember seedlings sprouting in the window from paper cups and watching damp yellow chicks struggling to hatch out of the eggs we had incubated for weeks and weeks.

Like my memories from Israel, these memories are fragments that swirl together into the illusion of a seamless whole of school years neatly and beautifully linking the curriculum of color and beauty and life to my belonging, my place in the world, and my sure and certain connection to the students around me. But in third grade, I have a different memory, a memory of a rupture in community. I remember learning the feeling of being different, of feeling loss and shame, of being separate, strange and cast out of the harmonious comfort I had always known, of all that schooling had been to me thus far. And this rupture began simply enough in the romantic play-acting of a common childhood fable, *The Tortoise and the Hare*. The standard moral of Aesop's tale of two small animals pitted against each other, racing to determine the winner, was never contested by any of my third-grade classmates, but I learned a far different lesson - a lesson about the rupture of community - a story I will tell a little later in this chapter.

Community: Metaphors of Soil and Blood

In simple terms, our very early understandings of community are oriented to locatable places and the distinct family groups that are connected to these locatable places. The physicality of a land that designated a place, the geographic lines, the cartography, as well as the biological connections and laws of ownership that connected a distinguishable group of people to their land, generated definitions of community as rooted in the soil - the familial land, as well as in the blood ties that connected individuals to others who shared claims to the physical land (Lyon, 2002). This early understanding of community as soil/place/familial land is closely tied to the second understanding of community as blood/family/kinship. It is not surprising then that these two interconnected themes, *soil* and *blood*, emerge as the foundational metaphors that cast long shadows over much of the future theoretical examinations of community. Both *soil* and *blood*, while immediately useful placeholders to conceptualize community, are nevertheless words that are emotionally charged and freighted with religious, political, and economic connotations and implications, and poetically interwoven with the symbolism of community as a body. In fact, in our current historical moment, the chant "blood and soil" has been appropriated by white supremacists in the United States as a rallying cry, a chant that articulates their crude racial and territorially limited conceptualization of who or what may be called American, a chant directly tied to the nineteenth century German slogan *blut und boden*[4], which Nazi's used to clearly demarcate the lines of belonging.

Long after the earliest people groups in tribes and clans were building small collections of huts from rocks and mammoth bones, the golden age of Greek democracy,

[4] The Nazis appropriated and corrupted the historical use of *blood and soil* as it was understood in the Roman Empire as the requirement for citizenship, where only landowners could be citizens.

which lasted about two hundred years ending around 300 BC, produced words like *ekklesia* that spoke to ideas of civic assembly within democracy, and *koinonia* that framed ideas of community, communion, intimacy, and fellowship. Years later, religion embraced and played with these words and ideas of gathering, such that St. Augustine of Hippo near 397 AD formed a religious community in which members followed his Rule of community and intimacy and endeavored to "live harmoniously, being united in mind and heart on the way of God" (p.30), and the Moravian Church, which has its roots in Eastern Europe in the early 1400s, who claimed for themselves the ideas of *unitas fratrum* or the unity of the brethren. Through etymology we can trace the unfolding understanding of community in Latin, Old French, and Old English and uncover various understandings of community as commonness or commonality, fellowship, relational society, or a body of fellows or fellow townsmen. Through time, the words and the ideas they contain are artfully chosen to represent the various beliefs, purposes, and orientations of those who use them, yet in each iteration they speak to a collectivity of human experience and life.

These linguistic reference points were formalized in 1887, when the German sociologist and philosopher, Ferdinand Tönnies offered a benchmark definition of community that contrasts two distinct forms of community. Carefully defining the two kinds of community, Tönnies clarifies that there is either *gesellschaft*, which he defined as impersonal ties and duty for society, local place, like those urban, industrial contexts "found in modern, capitalist states," or, *gemeinschaft*, which he defined as social relations based on close family ties, and belonging together (Tönnies, 1957, as cited in Lyon, 2002, p. 378). Tönnies' two definitions strategically divide community into either

impersonal, formalized, civic communities based on place, or intimate familial communities of relatedness and identification. In this way, *gesellschaft,* with its inherent distance addresses the metaphoric *soil* orientation of a locatable place and the civic need for building community among different individuals now living in close urban proximity. Where on the other hand, *gemeinschaft*, Tönnies' "gold standard community" (Lyon, 2002, p. 378) addresses the *blood* foundation of community, prioritizing "commonalities...a bond, a measure of commitment, a set of shared values, a culture, a history, and a shared identity" (Lyon, 2002, p. 375).

Less than 50 years after Tönnies' precise bifurcation of *community*, the American urban sociologist, Robert Park (1936) located three definitions of community, and drawing upon them he theorized a brand new definition of community as "a population territorially organized,...rooted in the soil it occupies, [and] its individual units living in a relationship of mutual interdependence" (Park, 1936 as cited in Lyon, 2002, p. 375). Park's modernized definition extends the connection to both metaphors of *soil* and *blood*; but while the literal word "soil" is used, the blood identification has faded to ideas of relationship and interdependence. The shift is subtle, no doubt, but the primacy of the definition as oriented toward community being first and foremost about sharing a physical place is evident. It is in this way perhaps that our orientation towards community as tied to ideas of the common good, the common weal, and the body politic find their place, for the various ideas of the commonwealth frame the necessity for there to be mutual engagement and mutual benefit when we live in a shared space. The democratic educator and civic organizer, Harry Boyte (1984) illuminates this idea when he explains that "the vocabulary of the commonwealth...symbolizes a public sphere which

simultaneously reflects and reinforces the virtues of individual citizens joined in communities conscious of their moral interdependence" (p.13). It is therefore, the focus upon the public place, the shared territory, the symbolic *soil*, that becomes our orientation in the story of community. To maintain peaceable governance and shared holding of the *soil*, we are best served when we recognize and cultivate our interdependence.

In continuing to follow the thread of the language of community, I will fast forward about another twenty years from Park's 1936 new definition of community to 1955, where community theorist, George Hillery's research "found no fewer than 94 different community definitions" (Hillery, 1955, as cited in Lyon, 2002, p. 375). Analyzing this vast array of definitions, Hillery identified three core elements for defining community: (1) a specific place; (2) common human ties; and (3) human social interaction (Lyon, 2002). As before, the foundational markers of *soil* and *blood* are still evident in his scholarship, yet what emerges most clearly is a concrete, or physical, understanding of community. Community is first and foremost a specific place with some measure of interactive human ties, ties far less intimate than blood kinship. Thus, over time, historic and cultural changes, modernity, industrialization, and the growth of urban cities and suburban sprawl, compounded the thinning of symbolic and literal blood ties, and communities became most commonly seen as shaped by the power of place - the primacy of *soil*, the places where we live and engage together. The line of theoretical examination followed by these theorists and philosophers orients community as "inherently place based, reflecting the history, culture, and socioeconomics of the community" (Moore, 2014, p. 4). There are always references to the weaker symbolism of *blood* in the evolutionary language of community, but those blood or kinship

references tend to emerge in service of the soil. What this short historical and linguistic exploration reveals most keenly are the ways in which the place of community became the primary object of study, with human expressions and characteristics, the *blood* metaphor, examined primarily in their relationship to place.

In this way, I find myself circling back around and thinking about John Winthrop's seminal community sermon with which I started this chapter and the ways in which his language speaks to the commonwealth and the common good, the social and civic responsibility to engage with members in such a way that the sense of the community as a "body" is retained. Winthrop is concerned not only with collective labor and collective social benefits, but with an experience of community that is somehow body-like, or embodied. I read in his sermon an injunction to not forget that in our mutual work in the land, or place, or *soil* of our community, we remain as a collective body. That somehow in the shared work, we endeavor to hold on to, to not forget, and to cultivate the symbolic *blood* ties and "be knit together... as one man" (Winthrop, 1633, p.1). But what does this call to a communal life as a body mean? Is it a call to remember the *blood* orientation of community, that we are symbolically a family, linked to this new land in a familial expression of community, or is it more? Quite possibly, Winthrop's call to experience community as a body, draws its inspirational language from the letter by St. Paul to the early Corinthian church where he frames the language of belonging to participating as functional members of one body. For Winthrop this scriptural imagery would likely be foundational to his ideation of community, but perhaps his words are more than poetic or literary devices, more than scriptural allusions evoking scriptural orientations, but words about the centrality of human experiences as embodied

community, words I suggest he might well use not only as an encouragement but as a warning against the challenges that exist in the future outworking of community.

Just as in Winthrop's historical moment as in ours almost 400 years later, when establishing and maintaining community as we traditionally understand the word, communities are by nature characterized in their efforts to draw individuals together into uniformity, like-minded, or harmonious groups, which share values, belief systems, and traditions, for in conformity and integration there is the promise of stability and connection. Thus, when diverse individuals without close ties to one another engage and interact within locatable places, such as in an urban neighborhood, we use the language of community to indicate peaceable cooperative spaces and the word community "signifies smoothing over differences, uniting a divided people, healing a broken nation" (Abowitz, 1999, p.143). This understanding of community as something concrete and locatable may acknowledge diversity, yet be compelled nonetheless to subdue difference and create assimilating or unifying connections between diverse individuals.

Thus, in conventional or traditional communities that endeavor to coalesce or unite individuals, the efforts of community building are to overcome the absent blood ties with strategies that enable individuals to claim their sense of belonging within the locatable spaces where they live and find their being, and to attempt to find their place as members of the community through conformity. The theologian Miroslav Volf (1996) examines this work to create community stability through homogenizing efforts, explaining "we assimilate or eject strangers in order to ward off the perceived threat of chaotic waters rushing in" (p. 64). In other words, for the security and stability of the community, difference can only be understood as a threat which demands action - to

make the same, or to shun those who are different. Because of this inherent characteristic of conventional understandings of community, which demands uniformity for membership in the community, the story of community cannot end here. Faced with the demand of inclusion, the unfolding story of community reveals challenges to the formalistic constraints of the traditional community, and the language that has attempted to define it, in search of new definitions and new expressions of human togetherness. According to Volf (1966) "the history of modern democracies is about progressive and ever-expanding inclusion" (p. 58), and this effort towards broader inclusion becomes evident in other forms of community.

Challenging the Soil and Moving Beyond Blood

In his theological exploration of otherness and the possibility of reconciliation, *Exclusion and Embrace,* Miroslav Volf (1996) writes "a consistent pursuit of inclusion places one before the impossible choice between a chaos without boundaries and oppression with them" (p. 64). As the story of community weaves and threads its way onward, it must wrestle with these two oppositional forces, either the chaos of difference and the threatening possibility of including strangers into the community, or its counterpoint, the inevitable human diminishment of mandatory conformity as a prerequisite for inclusion within the traditional community. Historically and contemporarily there have emerged many different versions of community that challenge the confinement of uniformity and homogeneity implied by *blood* and *soil* which cannot possibly be examined in this context. However, in moving beyond conventional understandings of community to those that experiment with a more expansive understanding of human belonging, I choose to discuss two distinctly textured threads of

theoretically informed community that emerge and twist away in diverging directions, each framing distinct approaches to communities that attempt to respond to difference. One thread of theoretical inquiry extends and critiques how the *soil*, or physical location of human communal experience, can be reinvented through various social and political mechanisms, while a second thread of theoretical inquiry focuses on redefining and reinterpreting human connection in order to transcend the traditional bond of kinship and belonging once found through *blood*.

Communities In and Beyond Place

The first thread that twists away from the earlier conventional definitions and understandings of community continues to frame community through the orientation of place, while at the same time, critiques the limitations that come from the homogenizing requirements for community membership. Putnam (2007) suggests, "the central challenge for modern, diversifying societies is to create a new, broader sense of 'we'" (p. 139). Thus, in the efforts to expand 'we,' various bodies of theoretical work have developed to consider both inclusion and freedom.

In such communities, important theoretical exploration has emerged in the areas of democracy, citizenship, and civic organization and renewal, led by the scholar and activist Harry Boyte (2013); the imperative for citizen education programs for the achievement of civil rights as explored by Dorothy Cotton (2012); field theory to help conceptualize the organizing structures of community (Bourdieu, 1986; Flora, 1998; Sharp, 2001); examinations of social capital and social agency (Flora, 1986; Putnam, 2007); as well as in a diverse range of work in community ethnographic studies that emerged from the Chicago School of Sociology in the works of Louis Wirth (1938),

William Foote Whyte (1943) and Mitchell Duneier (1992), among others. While far ranging in the questions they ask and their theoretical perspectives, these scholars each begin their inquiries from the orientation of a community of place and critique various ways diverse individuals may connect, or may better connect, and engage in these locatable places. Through their uniquely different approaches they are each seeking to explore how human connections are formed. Knowing that we have this definable place that is a community, how do we connect in this place? What contributes to connection and belonging? How might belonging be understood and cultivated? How does connection relate to democracy? What occurs when one or some are outside of connection, belonging and community?

There are multiple, often intersecting concerns which are examined. Concerns about the "absence of coordinated and credible mutual commitment" have led to research in "networks, norms, and trust, that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit" (Putnam, 1993, p. 2), "solidarity, civic participation, and integrity" (Putnam, p. 1993, p. 4), as well as community engagement and "mutuality and reciprocity" (Moore, 2014, p. 13). Additionally, education towards freedom, civic work and citizenship, the activities of "organizing oneself out of one's position" (Boyte, 1984/2013), and explorations of transacting social capital through institutional rites of passage, and symbolic "signs of recognition" (Bourdieu, 1986, pp. 249, 250), are rich topics of theoretical exploration. Each of these lines of inquiry works to uncover new ideas for cultivating complex human relationships between dissimilar individuals who find themselves living together or engaging in locatable communities of place. These communities acknowledge the difficulties, inequities, and power dynamics that exists in

communities marked by human diversity. They question the place of diversity within the community and within democracy. Resolutely holding fast to the *soil,* or the physical and locatable component of community, these communities set aside the *blood* connection of kinship, and explore more finely negotiated spaces of mediated social, civic, and political interaction.

Taking this understanding of community one step further, Jurgen Habermas (1996), proposes the ideal communication society (Peters & Burbles, 2004, p. 28), which operates beyond the confinement of any location, and is a "self-organizing community of free and equal citizens" (Habermas 1996, p. 7), and overcomes difference through reason and discourse. Habermas theorizes a new form of human connectedness that fully dismisses the metaphoric *blood* based communities, suggesting instead that human community could be achieved through rational discourse that is "unrestrained and universal" enabling a "unconstrained consensus to emerge" (Habermas 1970, p. 370, as cited by Crotty, 1998, p. 143). Rather than blood uniting humans into community, Habermas theorizes that reason and discourse could build a community of human connectedness, beyond human difference, and even beyond borders; thus, in some ways the metaphor of the *soil* in his critically conceptualized community is eliminated as well as the *blood*. Rising above both constraints of *blood* and *soil*, Habermas' theory of a democratic ideal of universal citizens working together through their collective reason was emancipatory, overcoming human difference and proposing "intersubjective understanding" (Crotty, 1998, p. 143). Turning his focus to universal norms, Habermas argues that the most common human building block upon which connection and community might be forged, rests upon reason and dialogue, not our familial ties, not

even in the collective living spaces some see as demarking community. Neither constraint applies to Habermas, and what remains is the power of logical and communicative ties to frame community.

There are both intersections and divergences in the story of the community I have just presented, and my poetic unfolding of the story with its twisting threads, resists easy categories, suggesting a blurring of clean lines of demarcation, and offering instead interwoven, intersectional historical rememberings (Miller, 2010). The webwork narrative of community reveals in itself many places where the understandings and outworkings of community cannot be neatly contextualized, instead occupying multiple positions at once, perhaps even detaching from the warp and weft and from one ideation of community to another.

Communities Beyond Blood

Returning to the two threads of community that resist either the narrow orientations towards *soil* or *blood*, I suggest that this second thread diverges in the other direction, away from communities that hold fast to place and "to create a new, broader sense of 'we'" (Putnam, 2007, p. 139), and instead, these communities seek to redefine and theorize expanded perspectives beyond *blood*, or human kinship oriented communities. Examining this thread more closely, I locate three explorations of community with expanded expressions of the metaphoric *blood* or familial ties in theorizing networks of ontological care.

One example of such a community may be found in the nonviolent work and discourse of Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Civil Rights movement. The language he employs is crafted to frame a community of human connectedness across difference that

was not based on a shared space but instead on the recognition of a shared humanity that emerges from love and nonviolent interconnectedness, which exists beyond *blood*. For King and the Civil Rights Movement, this democratic ideal of citizens working together through their collective love was emancipatory and had the potential to create what King calls the "beloved community." Describing the future of this work, King (1957) speaks,

> But the end is reconciliation; the end is redemption; the end is the creation of the beloved community. It is this type of spirit and this type of love that can transform opposers into friends. The type of love that I stress here is not eros, a sort of esthetic or romantic love; not philia, a sort of reciprocal love between personal friends; but it is agape which is understanding goodwill for all men. It is an overflowing love which seeks nothing in return. It is the love of God working in the lives of men. This is the love that may well be the salvation of our civilization. (Included in Sunnemark, 2003, p. 71)

King's *beloved community* bridges difference and is built upon the unifying power of divine love made manifest in human action. While different from the reason and dialogue proposed by Habermas, King proposes a community in which belonging could be achieved across profound human difference. Although absent of blood ties, a re-defined sense of kinship is expanded to a shared humanity in connections.

A different exploration of these expansive ties of kinship beyond *blood* can be found in the theoretical work and lived experiences of Jane Addams. Guided by a desire to care, support, and advocate for the floods of immigrants coming to the United States in the late 1800s, Jane Addams began a project of art and culture classes that evolved into a fully formed community called Hull House, which eventually provided a wrap-around

community of education, housing, relationship, and social integration in the middle of Chicago's immigrant center (Hendry, 2011). Through her work, Addams developed a keen theoretical voice that spoke to the ways in which democracy is enriched by diversity, and critiqued the limitations of romantic ideas of community that do not take into consideration the complexities of real human lived experience. Drawing from her lived experiences, "her notion of 'radical democracy' embraced the experiences of women, African-Americans, and immigrants by bringing their values into the community, not by erasing their ethnic culture and lifestyle" (Hendry, 2011, p. 136). At Hull House, community was forged through making a valued space for human difference, and through an intentional honoring of difference an opportunity for relationships could form. Speaking from years of living a social experiment to integrate immigrant strangers into the Chicago community, Addams (1911) wrote, "our early democracy was a moral romanticism, rather than a well-grounded belief in social capacity and the efficiency of the popular will" (p. 34). Hull House challenged this romanticism, both experimenting and demonstrating a praxis of building a community, where the shared physical space became the axis around which community emerged, but not the defining criteria of community. Always challenging the normative gravitational pull into human engagements that assimilate or exclude, the community Jane Addams created was built upon embracing difference such that difference enriches the life of the community as it can be found when humans live life together.

Extending this thread a bit more, another version of community might also be suggested by the Brazilian philosopher and educator Paulo Freire (1968), who challenges the power structures that create and maintain human divisions as well as proposing

strategies for establishing human connection, integration, and emancipation for those excluded from society. Like the emblematic *blood* ties, Freire proposes a poetic and expansive vision of love, a love for the world and a love for humanity, as a force that enables human connection by overcoming the power structures that divide human experience into the oppressors and the oppressed. Freire understood that these power structures dehumanize both the oppressed and the oppressors and his pedagogy pursued emancipation and restoration of humanity to both the oppressed and their oppressors. For Freire, the work of freedom and equity begins with a foundational reorientation towards love, a bond that can connect all members of the community.

Where Habermas leaves us holding onto the cool critical perspective of reason and dialogue to connect humanity across difference, Freire, takes a step back and suggests that something closer, warmer, more human is required before Habermas' communicative community can emerge. Freire (1968) suggests that love must exist before reason, stating, "if I do not love the world if I do not love life if I do not love people I cannot enter into dialogue" (p. 71). I understand in Freire the effort to overcome the divisions separating humanity by exploring the possibility of forging new ties between those who are different. In positioning love as the framework of the future emancipatory work of teaching and learning, Freire establishes a community connected by love rather than by *blood*, recognizing of course that both blood and love are embodied. The works of King, Addams and Freire make for a complicated intersection of thoughts and practices. Yet in their efforts to conceptualize human interactions that allow for human difference, I see in them a shared undercurrent of kinship, loving

engagement with the other that King (1957) suggests, "can transform opposers into friends" (Sunnemark, 2003, p. 71).

An Intertwining Story

Both of the threads I have examined attempt to challenge the homogenizing or exclusionary pressures embedded in traditional understanding of community, and respond to the challenges of difference by theorizing new ways to conceptualize identification within locatable spaces or new ways of redefining the characteristics that connect humanity other than *blood*. If on one hand, effort is expended towards enhancing and mediating human interaction for the sake of building community, attentiveness towards social capital, social networks, and "connections among individuals" and the "norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them" (Putnam, 2000, p. 19) becomes the groundwork for community. Such work requires forms of continual engagement that brings different individuals together for the purpose of "deliberating, discussing, working, and coming to judgements about difference and its relevance to our shared lives" (Abowitz, 1999, p. 159).

If on the other hand, effort is expended to pursue community experiences of ontological kinship or symbolic familial connectedness that exists beyond the assimilation or exclusion required in traditional communities, then what follows is a community building effort that recognizes the need to include and honor difference in lived experiences. Hannah Arendt (1968) writes that "moral judgement cannot function in strict isolation or solitude; it needs the presence of others 'in whose place' it must think, whose perspective it must take into consideration" (p.221, as cited in Volf, 1996, p. 211). This statement suggests that whereas reason, morality, judgement, and discourse

offer legitimate and rational engagement as the mechanism to overcome diversity and oppression in the pursuit of equity, justice, goodness and the realization of community; something more is still needed, the framework of love and care for others.

In the end, both threads of community respond to the challenges of allowing human difference a place within community. Both threads of community stretch, morph, and reimagine community while remaining tied in some way to the metaphors of either *soil* or *blood* in order to engage the confounding complications of human difference and resist the tendencies towards assimilation or exclusion. Yet in these projects, the obstacles for achieving community are not fully resolved. In his bestselling book, *Bowling Alone*, political scientist and Harvard professor, Robert Putnam (2000) traces the story of diminished community engagement in the United States using expansive anecdotal narratives and minute statistical data. Whether examining the *soil* metaphor of citizenship, engagement and agency, or the *blood* metaphor of forms of human kinship, Putnam carefully tells the story of how Americans once found community easily and regularly and now fail to build community and fail to maintain it.

> For the first two-thirds of the twentieth century a powerful tide bore Americans into deeper engagements in the life of their communities, but a few decades ago – silently, without warning - that tide reversed and we were overtaken by a treacherous rip current. Without at first noticing, we have been pulled apart from one another and from our communities over the last third of the century.
>
> (Putnam, 2000, p. 27)

As Putnam describes, there has been a rupture in community, and the modernist narrative of the community continues to work diligently to repair the breach. My sentence is

framed with poetic language and draws upon our fears of catastrophe - the floods that rush in against the ruptured dam, just as Putnam similarly writes of swallowing currents that tear and shred. My word choices, as well as his, indicate that the swirling currents of community are prone to overflow their banks and wreak havoc. Putnam ends his book with a corrective challenge to repair the community experiences in the United States, and I believe he remains hopeful. Surely the story of community has not been drowned. Perhaps the movement of the tide may pull what appears to be despairing fragments to unexpected places that speak to other hopeful possibilities?

Fables and Ruptures: Stories of Dismemberment

In setting about writing an autobiographical narrative, it is important to name myself, to disclose the ways in which I am positioned as a person privileged by some social constructions. I am white, middle-class, and female - social constructions that position my autobiography in distinct ways. I know I have not experienced the position of difference, otherness, and strangeness in the same way as those who have been more acutely marginalized by society than me. Yet in my childhood story that follows, I present a narrative of education through which I come to know, something of what it means to be made a stranger, to be made aware of my difference, within the community. My husband and children, however, know different social constructions and experiences of otherness, and I will intertwine a portion of their story with mine.

My Fable

There were three third grade classes in my very diverse elementary school which stood in a wooded neighborhood less than five miles from the location of the Tulsa Race Massacre, the largest in history of the United States which occurred in 1921 in Tulsa,

Oklahoma. (An event that until recently has been called a race *riot*, problematic terminology that suggests other connotations.) As a child, I was unaware of those events in history that had destroyed what has been considered the most vibrant African American community of its day, and I was also unaware that my school lay on the other side of the historic dividing line that continues to separate Tulsa into North and South, and to this day, almost 100 years later, continues to separate the largest populations of blacks from whites in our city. As a child, I only knew that I loved my teacher, Mrs. Thomas, and I loved my classmates. We were friends and my classroom was my community.

Somewhere in the year we began reading fables, and my third-grade classmates and I were divided into groups to rewrite a fable and act it out for the rest of the class. My group was selected to present *The Tortoise and the Hare*. We spent a few days writing out our script and planning our costumes. I remember being very excited about my costume for the role of the hare which I was to play. I had the best idea for the hare's tail. My sisters and I had been given a bath set of fragranced lotion and bath powder that came with a pink powder-puff on a long handle. I was certain that the pink cottony puff about the size of my hand would make the very best tail for my costume. I planned all of the other pieces of my costume centered around the pink puff, even selecting a pink shirt to match my tail.

The day of the fable presentation I collected all of my costume bits, but when it came time to get ready to present, I was confused and disoriented that no other students had constructed costumes the way I had. One group had made paper bag masks, but others had no costumes at all. I remember wanting to hide my costume and deciding

resolutely not to wear it as I would appear foolish. As chance would have it, my mother was a 7th grade teacher at my school and she had arranged to leave her class and come watch my performance. Being a supportive mother and a teacher, she insisted I wear the cute costume that I had planned and been so excited about just the night before. I cried. I wanted to avoid the shame of looking different. I wanted to avoid being shamed for trying too hard, for being creative, a show-off, for being excited and eager about the project, for being silly enough to think a pink powder puff tail was a good idea, and most of all for being seen for who I was. This is a simple and awkwardly funny childhood story of a pink rabbit's tale, but it is also a painful story, one that is hard to tell. I still feel prickles of embarrassment as I write this story.

It is a story of shame, albeit simple shame, and separation, and being made aware of my difference. I felt shame on the inside and I felt shamed from the outside. I felt shame for how I appeared in the eyes of my classmates, foolish, over-eager, and childish. I felt shame for all I imagined that they saw in me, and now all that I saw in myself.

As I reflect on this story with a critical eye, I see so many other layers of marginalization that were no doubt far greater than mine in my very diverse classroom. It strikes me how my simple story points to the breaking of community, the rupture in the story community. My difference was made visible, I became aware of my strangeness and my estrangement from my classmates. And I suggest that this is the very same rupturing of community that occurs again and again in the face of difference, whether it is otherness as defined by religion, or skin color, or culture, or ethnicity, or language, or gender, or sexuality, or ability, or class, or opportunity, or as in my childhood fable - a pink rabbit's tail.

Remember John Winthrop's admonition for community, "we must delight in each other, make others' conditions our own, rejoice together, mourn together, labor, and suffer together, always having before our eyes our commission and community in the work, our community as members of the same body" (included in Gilder, 2013). His words speak to two interlinking points; first that there is a shared vision of a work in community, and second, that there is a relational bodily wholeness that results from this likeness of action and likeness of mind, and as such without those norms, the body of the community cannot remain intact. When there is an imbalance in the normative comfort of the body, be it a difference that challenges, violates, threatens or even questions, the different must be ejected. Thus, it is easy for me to concur with Biesta (2004) when he states, "all communities produce their own strangers" (p. 313).

Another Family Fable

Native American identity is continually contested and the efforts to define this identity emerge through the socially and politically constructed measurement of blood quantum or along the lines of cultural affiliation (Schmidt, 2011). An anthropologist, Schmidt (2001) argues, "American Indians, unlike any other American ethnic group, must constantly prove their identity, which in turn, forces them to adopt whatever Indian histories or identities are needed to convince themselves and others of their Indian identity, and thus their unique cultural heritage" (p. 1). Schmidt's (2011) fundamental question asks, what is "an appropriate means to recognize and define just what and who is an Indian" (p. 1)? His question is the starting point for another family fable.

My husband's father had a small piece of paper with perforated edges about the size of a business card that indicated he was a full-blood Cherokee Indian. Even without

knowing about this paper, my husband as a little boy knew his father was an Indian and that his mother was *unega*, white, the nickname he remembers her being called. My husband's childhood memories are full of stories of the river, and wild onions, and campfires, and the beautiful sculptures and drawings his father made. His childhood is also heartbreakingly full of fear and anger, alcoholism and violence, and the eventual rupturing of a family that could no longer stand under the weight of such turmoil. At seven years of age when his parents divorced, he saw a simple, childlike choice for himself. He could be white or he could be Indian, and given what little he had seen of his father's life in those brief few years, and understanding even less of the complexities of his father's story, he simply knew he was not going to be an Indian like his father, even if he did not yet know what it meant to be an Indian, or to be a father.

This seemingly uncomplicated childhood decision seemed simple enough to make and keep. Living in a new town far from Tahlequah, Oklahoma, the town where his grandparents and extended family lived and the cultural home of the Cherokees after the Removal, there was no daily reminder of who he might be if he were a Native American. There was no community to be a part of, no rituals, no traditions, no ribbon shirts, no stomp grounds, no feasts, no memories passed down in stories and songs. It was simple to color in the "white" bubbles on all of his demographic documents. He was not an Indian. Perhaps it is possible that at seven he became an exile.

Decades later when he became a father himself, new questions emerged, new possible identities resurfaced, asking complicated questions that pointed to contested narratives about who he was, who he might have been in another versions of history (Miller, 2010), and who he could still become. He got his own "Indian Card" in the mail

with the blood quantum ½ typed neatly on the same style card with perforated edges that his father had. What does it mean to be who I am? What does it mean to be half Cherokee? Where do I belong? He enrolled in Cherokee language classes, carefully drawing the strange alphabet on flashcards, learning new names, making new vocal intonations, experimenting with the new world opened by a language, at once familiar like ghosts from the past, yet still unknown, the mystery of a home he had never known.

Jump ahead another two decades, our middle daughter asks her own complicated questions with her card in her hand: What does it mean to be a Native American? Exiled perhaps, since before she was born, from a living community through the stories and choices made by others long years in the past, she wondered what would it be like to find a new community, to explore the hidden unknown identity that is ¼ me, or so the small piece of paper says? Our daughter enrolled in a Native American land grant university. It was a doorway to discovering herself and the community that she had never known. But while her paperwork qualified her enroll, there was not as direct an entry to the rich Native American community thriving at the school. Eager to participate in her new community, she bumped into barriers again and again, barriers that told her she was not Indian enough. She did not know the stories and traditions. She did not look the part, or know her part. She was told, "because you look white, that makes you white." No matter what her heritage, no matter what the little card told her, because her physical appearance was somewhere between social or biological constructions of "white-ness" and constructions of "Indian-ness," she was seen to occupy a place of privilege, perhaps a place nearer to me, her white mother. She learned that her world view and orientation was too white, too colonized, too Christianized. She could not find a space to "learn"

herself, and few would risk inviting her in, to guide her exploration or teach her, to help her uncover or write her own stories. She found herself perpetually on the margins, as one who did not grow up with a native culture and so could not find a place within a native community. She described herself as Native American, but not Native enough, trapped or exiled, living in the middle.

Ruptures

These family stories illuminate the breakdown in community that occurs when the vision of community, the "laboring together" described by Winthrop (1633) is ruptured. Without a common normative work, or shared commitment to a single project, or orientation, or worldview, or value system, the community as a body breaks down, and in order to protect itself, the body must dismember the offending part, removing, pushing away the ones who interrupt the project of community. This dis-membering, or no longer membering, or refusing membership is the protective action of the community against otherness.

My silly pink costume tail, my over enthusiastic behavior, signifies to my classmates my difference and they dis-member me, or through the shame I feel I am dis-membered. I feel as if I am no longer a member of the body, my class, and am exiled either through my own flight to the bathroom to cry, or by the physical distance or disapproving glances I receive from my classmates. My daughter's "white-ness" and absent Native American cultural upbringing, her otherness, makes authentic membership in a Native American community an im/possibility, so far. My daughter feels the longing to understand her complex and contested identity, and yet she feels the line of demarcation that has, so far, not allowed her cross over into a new identity and a new

community. She cannot claim membership and feels exiled to a space between two communities. My husband made choices as a little boy to exile himself from his father's story that caused him pain - a story that was easy to make into the fable of "Indian-ness." He enacted his own dismemberment and chose to no longer claim membership to his native community.

Throughout American history, perhaps all human history, there are other fables, and other ruptures, and other stories of exiles and dismemberments which are far more devastating than the family fables I have told. There are others who experience rejection, exclusion, estrangement, and brutality due to their perceived otherness and find themselves longing for a compassionate kinship of community that welcomes and embraces beyond their differences. For these others in our midst there is a longing for an experience of belonging that might be found in a different kind of community.

Communities of Difference: Reinterpreting Togetherness

As a response to the difficulties of experiencing traditional communities of place and familial connection, the language of grief and longing for a "lost community" (Lyon, 2002, p. 374) is pervasive. Our sense of removal from romanticized traditional community of natural kinship and harmonious place resonates with echoes of the biblical narrative of the expulsion from Eden. This language of lost community is also echoed in the modernist critique of failing community offered by Robert Putnam (2000), and in the restorative democratic work of Henry Boyte (2013). In the loss of easy and comfortable experiences of traditional community, in the collapse of public life and the radical shrinking of democracy, and in the language of loss found in my own autobiographical story of dismemberment and the personal narratives of exclusion known by so many,

ideas of crisis, trauma, and brokenness become valuable words for beginning the story of possible poststructural communities of difference.

Unlike conventional communities which assemble similar individuals and exclude those who cannot be assimilated, poststructural communities are comprised of profoundly diverse individuals, and as such, these radical expressions of community begin at the breaking point or rupture of traditional communities and ask: what kind of human togetherness can be found when conformity, or reason, or discourse can no longer build the desired bridge of community? Poststructural communities also ask, who carries the burden of belonging?

Poststructuralism critiques grand narratives, challenges the science of structures, and interrogates the humanism that understood the self as stable, self-knowing, and autonomous. As a theoretical perspective, poststructuralism unsettles efforts to establish community based on commonality, mutual understanding, and shared knowledge of the other, suggesting instead a community of irreconcilable differences that emerge from the "impossibility of knowing either oneself or the other" (Chinnery, 2006, p. 333). Such a community cannot be homogenized, nor can it summon consensus from its diverse constituents. This construction of community may even challenge the benefits of community on the terms of commonality. What remains from this rupture are disparate individuals bound together by the proximity, institution, societal mechanisms, or circumstances of life; they are the floating flotsam and jetsam of an unrealized traditional community experience.

From this perspective, the human collective experiences that exist outside the assimilating forces of traditional community might be thought of as philosopher Jacques

Derrida's (1997) concept of "community without community," or what philosopher and religion professor John Caputo (1997) classifies as "non-identical community" (as cited by Chinnery, 2006, p. 332), or what curriculum theorist Janet Miller (2010) calls "community without consensus," or what the feminist and psychoanalyst Julia Kristeva (1993) names "polyvalent communities" (p.35), or philosopher Alphonso Lingis (1994) calls "the community of those who have nothing in common," or feminist scholar Ewa Ziarek (2001) names "dissensus" and educational philosopher Gert Biesta (2004) simply calls "the other community." Each of these theorists have crafted language to suggest there may be community expressions that not only resist assimilating forces, but that also forge generative possibilities for potential human togetherness.

Difference is the hallmark of the poststructural community, thus rather than attempting to cultivate assimilative practices or build logical consensus, these communities pursue engagements with the other, with the stranger in their midst. Because the homogenizing rules of the traditional community have been set aside, the interconnected members of the poststructural community now stands without norms, consensus, or universal logics, thus cultivating intersectional relationality with the other becomes the foundation for the possibility of building community. By opening the self to the other, a space of vast revolutionary possibility is created for "a different community...where we are all strangers for each other" (Biesta, 2004, p. 315). This is the language of a different kind of community, a community of strangers together *for* one another emerges as the context of the poststructural community, where the intersections of compassion and responsibility enables new modes of generative relationality.

Thus, building poststructural community beyond norms of *soil* or *blood* requires a humility which recognizes the "infinite responsibility for justice without the assurance of normative criteria" (Ziarek, 2001, p. 6). Difference then is not something to be smoothed or bridged as in other versions of community, but a state of otherness where all members may share in life together regardless of their difference; and as such, it brings to bear a mutual shared responsibility to embody compassion and invitation in the pursuit of emancipatory relationships. In other words, we may find our belonging through the giving and receiving of compassionate recognition of our otherness in the eyes of the other. This is poetry and perhaps this is also in part what Pilder (1973) described as the possibility of "mutual indwelling" (as cited by Pinar 1974, pp. ixx) in the midst of difference.

Whereas traditional communities are structured around human sameness by their association with familial *soil* or *blood*, and critical communities are constructed by rational consensus achieved through dialogue, and caring communities seek to overcome difference through inclusive and honoring human kinships, poststructural communities are made possible by human compassion and alterity. Drawing upon Kristeva, Hongyu Wang (2004) writes that,

> relationship between self and other, based upon both compassion and alterity, expands one's psychic space to incorporate differences, enabling one to respond to others in a mutually sustainable way...we can envision a community in which the stranger within and the stranger without are welcome. (p. 101)

It is this welcoming compassion for all otherness, both within and without, that establishes the framework for this new form of poststructural community.

One Last Fable

I have told the story of community as twisting threads, divergently woven to include traditional communities, critical communities, caring communities, and poststructural communities. Perhaps I could also replace those artfully selected words with other words, ones that speak to the human work within these communities. Perhaps I could also call them projects in gathering, projects in calibration, projects in comradeship, and projects in revolution. These new and equally crafted designations may point to ways in which the story of community can be retold, and to the ways in which our desires may orient us towards the communities where we imagine the greatest possibility of experiencing togetherness, belonging, of finding home and kinship. Furthermore, these stories, however we name them, must always be seen as intersecting narratives, more than chronological developments, or stories told in opposition to each other, they are woven and interwoven, the various threads dip away from view and resurface in surprising new variations and patterns.

I offer as the close of this chapter, one last fable to illustrate this recursive story of history and challenge the ending destination I have no doubt suggested by stopping the story as I did with poststructural communities. By being the last in line, it could possibly suggest the furthest end of the spectrum of community, or the last to emerge in the chronology of history, or the inevitable outcome of human progress, or in contrast, perhaps point to globalization's destabilizing and destructive power. For this reason, I want to offer one possible retelling of poststructural communities of difference that existed far in the past and which suggests the ways in which all stories of community are intersecting and interwoven narratives.

The historian, James Loewen (1995) challenges the incomplete and mistold narratives in history textbooks, in his book, *Lies My Teacher Told Me*. Recounting early Native American interaction with European natives, Loewen suggests the possibility of alternate histories that move beyond both the romanticized stories of harmonious Thanksgiving feasts, as well as the catastrophic accounts of the buried stories of brutalization that are absent from most history textbooks. He illuminates some surprisingly multicultural community interactions that seem to reflect poststructural concerns for community. Loewen (1995) writes,

> In reality, whites and Native Americans worked together, sometimes lived together, and quarreled with each other for scores even hundreds of years. For 325 years, after all, from the first Spanish settlement in 1565 to the end of Sioux and Apache autonomy around 1890, independent Natives and European natives coexisted in what is now the United States. (p. 100)

He goes on to describe historical examples of nonracist communities that Sociologists call "triracial isolates because their heritage is white, black, and red" (p. 120) and suggest a cohabitation that was a reality, just one that was never fully realized. Loewen (1995) also describes a complex community that existed in an Ohio town, where in 1794 a community was forged from

> Shawnee, Miami, and Delaware Indians, British and French traders and artisans, several Nanticokes, Cherokees, and Iroquois, a few African Americans and white American captives, and whites who had married into or been adopted by Indian families. (p.100)

Loewen's (1995) revisioning of history illustrates the "possible peaceful coexistence of whites and Native Americans" (p.119) and challenges the inevitability of colonization that our familiar history reveals. Loewen illuminates the multiplicity and cohabitation that may have been manifested long before there were words to describe the existence of the poststructural community I describe in my story. While these endeavors of multicultural existence between Native Americans and European natives ultimately failed, they nevertheless illustrate that the story of community is complex, recursive, and intersecting. These alternate histories (Miller, 2010) suggest a story of community that is far from seamless and which resists an orderly unfolding, like steps along a path, or stitches in a line, each one neatly following the other.

In concluding my history of community, I want to draw once more upon Martin Luther King's (1957) language of the "beloved community" (included in Sunnemark, 2003, p. 71). The word *beloved* speaks of a community adored: the treasured community, the revered community, the community of which I am intimately connected, the community I love. Just as I have spoken about the language of loss illuminating our sense of separation from home, family, and belonging, the language of the *beloved community*, speaks to desire. In consideration of what may be possible in the future of poststructural communities of profound human difference, the role of desire plays a significant role, in that it establishes a compelling motivation and an embodied experience in the pursuit of what may emerge. Perhaps in some way, desire is "a way of searching, of voyaging; a task, an obligation that sheds a kind of light" (Greene, 1993, p. 225) on the possibilities for the future.

CHAPTER III

THE POETICS OF DIFFERENCE

"The need for connection may establish another poetics, some day."
(Kristeva, 2002, p. 233)

"I want to argue that metaphor is one of the chief agents of our moral nature, and that the more serious we are in life, the less we can do without it." (Ozick,1989, p. 270)

"If you want to change the world you have to change the metaphor." (Campbell, 1988)

Weaving as a Metaphor

Ancient cultures around the globe have produced richly varied stories of the creation of the world and of humanity through narratives of weaver goddesses and spider women. These myths of creativity, construction and cunning emerge in ancient Egypt, Japan, China, Greece, throughout Mesoamerica and in Native American cultures, as well as in Norse, Viking and early European cultures. While these narratives are astoundingly diverse, they all centralize the stories of women, even in the few cultures where men are historically known to be the more dominant weavers. Throughout my dissertation I employ the metaphor of weaving in order to articulate a conceptual design within my

theoretical exploration. This metaphor suggests a carefully crafted textile made up of various threads that rise into view, fall away and become visible again in the seven chapters. My intention is that the metaphor itself contributes to a sense of stability in the creative and discursive project I am undertaking by acting as the warp and weft, so to speak, on which I can tie, entwine, twist together and interweave the richly varied, interdisciplinary threads that make up my theoretical work. Rather than a confining grid of threads, imagine my weaving as open, intentionally planned yet divergent, even playful, a handwoven artistic structure that holds together through carefully crafted connections and disconnections.

My weaving metaphor is perhaps a sister to the rhizome metaphor suggested by Deleuze and Guattari (1983). "As a metaphor, rhizomes work against the constraints of authority, regularity, and commonsense, and open thought up to creative constructions" (Lather, 1993, p. 680). The helpfulness of such conceptual metaphors speaks to what Patti Lather (1993) critiques as the challenges to validity after poststructuralism. My weaving metaphor, like the rhizome metaphor, is "about the move from hierarchies to networks and the complexities of problematics where any concept, when pulled, is recognized as connected to a mass of tangled ideas, uprooted, as it were, from the epistemological field" (Pefanis, 1991, as cited in Lather, 1993, p. 680). Lather's visual description of the rhizome lays parallel to my own, such that in weaving, the pulling of any thread makes visible the knots, connections, disconnections, tangles, and beautiful surprising intersections that exist with other threads.

Spider Woman and Penelope at the Loom

Having chosen to utilize the weaving metaphor as an organizing tool, I wish to tease out a little more of the potential of this metaphor, and use it as a bridge to the themes that will follow in this chapter. Two short myths of weaving are illustrative of the way in which I conceptualize the notion of poetics, a word that appears in the title of my chapter and a theme that threads through to the end. Poetics, as I am using the word, is not narrowly aligned with language or literary critique, but rather, poetics is the work of exploring and exposing the potential, possibility, and imagination that are available through explorations of aesthetic knowledge. Poetics acknowledges the connections and disconnections, the distortions and the alignments, the familiar and the uncommon spaces that can emerge through innovative and critical inquiry. Poetics used this way engages both harmony and dissonance, and ushers in "the ability to look at things as if they could be otherwise" (Greene, 1993, p. 225).

The Navajo myth of the Spider Woman, does not tell the story of the creation of the word as does the Hopi narrative of the Spider Grandmother. Instead the Navajo story explains how the Spider Woman is instrumental in helping the sun god's creation move up from the first world into the second, and eventually, up through four different worlds to the world in which the Navajos currently reside. Through the help of the Spider Woman, beings who were originally created as insects and animals are able to escape the chaos of the first world and crawl up into the second and third world, a new place of inhabitation where they are transformed from insects into humans. Facing chaos, evil, and destruction in the third world, the Spider Woman continues her work of creative and

imaginative potential and helps the new people escape to the fourth world, where the Navajo continue to reside.

Drawing from their powerful mythology, the Navajo continue to revere the Spider Woman as their helper, benefactor, protector, teacher, and restorer of balance (Spider Woman, 1998) She is the one who imagines new ways of living beyond turmoil, illness and strife, making a way for transformed experiences through helping and leading others to move into new spaces. The short narrative of the Spider Woman draws our attention to poetic possibilities by engaging in critical examinations of current conditions, a pursuit of change, an embrace of creative potential, an awareness of the interconnectedness of things and experiences unseen, and the potential of opening uncommon spaces to become sites of imaginal work and transformation.

Another weaving myth which is illustrative of the work of poetics is presented in the second book of the *Odyssey*, where Homer recounts the story of Penelope, the wife of Odysseus, weaving and unweaving a burial shroud for her father-in-law as a scheme to ward off her unwanted suitors while she waits for her lost husband to return from war. Homer's narrative presents Penelope weaving a portion of the burial shroud each day, and each night tearing out her work so that the shroud is perpetually unfinished. Through her craftiness, and her craft as a weaver, Penelope creates time and space for alternate outcomes to her story to emerge.

The theme of emergence is one I will examine in greater depth in chapter five, but for now, I wish to consider the way in which the space between Penelope's weaving and unweaving, invokes the poetic, the imaginal space of possibility, interconnection, and creative potential. Like the Spider Woman who makes a way to help the Navajo migrate

from world to world, being transformed in the process, Penelope's weaving scheme engages the imagination and the possibility of transformation. Her poetic imagination looks beyond her current circumstances and imagines transformative possibilities: perhaps Odysseus may return; perhaps the suitors may tire of waiting after three years of weaving; perhaps some other escape might develop; perhaps Penelope may craft her own future. The *perhaps* that evokes alternative realities is the result of poetic imagination drawing us to attend to things yet unseen.

I suggest that both the story of the Spider Woman and the story of Penelope weaving at her loom offer revelatory glimmers of the poetic, the rhizomatic, and the play of possibility. While separate and unique in their own right, both weaving myths illustrate the creative potential to re-imagine through a holding open of time and a space for future potentials, the yet to be revealed, the fullness of possibility, or what Lather (1993) describes as "liberty or creativity," "the new" "that arises out of social practices, creativity which marks the ability to transform, to break down present practices in favor of future ones" (p. 680, drawing upon Deleuze, 1999, p. 163-164).

Poetics and Difference

Thus, it is enmeshed within this metaphor of weaving that I continue the story of community with the ultimate aim of reimagining curriculum as community building. To move forward in my exploration of community it is essential for me first to explore in this chapter our aesthetic knowledge of what is means to be different, a stranger, a foreigner, alien, the Other, in order to imagine anew our interconnectedness, or what it might mean to be "together as strangers" (Young, 1990, as cited in Abowitz, 1999, p. 147). As chapter two described, communities have habitually excluded or worked to

subsume difference. If my ultimate aim is to reimagine community such that assimilation and exclusion are nullified, it is a worthwhile aim to first think critically about difference. According to Hershock (2012) most posit difference as "a simple fact of discrepancy" (p. 12). Hershock elaborates, "first there are things, and then there are differences among them" (p. 29). What Hershock illuminates is that differentiation is a process. This conceptualization of a process contrasts with Deleuze (1995), who understood difference as the precondition of all being and beings. Though they stand in contrast, both perspectives suggest that difference can be critically examined to reveal complex sites of origination and methods of production. Difference cannot be accepted as a given, it must be scrutinized. As a response to the challenges raised regarding the constructions of difference, this chapter takes a poetic perspective and reflects upon constructions of difference before curriculum as community building is unfolded in the chapters that follow.

Therefore, my intent in this chapter is to twist together three diverse threads, each bringing its own color, texture and weight to the exploration of difference as both integral and inseparable to community. One thread is drawn from poetics and the revelatory potential of imagination, further exploring some of the themes raised in the two myths that began this chapter. My second thread emerges from the disruptive language used by some poststructural feminists as they theorize and articulate difference, otherness, strangeness, and consider the intertwining of connections/disconnections and belongings/nonbelongings. And my third thread considers Derrida's (2000) deconstruction of hospitality and the tensions embedded within the working out of hospitality. Together, through these three diverse threads I consider the poetic potential of

difference and suggest other hopeful perspectives in which difference may be reimagined as the space of interconnection within curriculum as community building. Now, to the loom.

Poetics: Invitation, Imagination and Uncommon Spaces

Having taken my inspiration from the mythological narratives of weaving and the spaces of possibility and imagination they reveal, I wish to open a similar space in which to arouse aesthetic knowledge through poetics and to look beyond the taken for granted conceptualizations of *difference* that rise up to meet our gaze, and see instead complex connections between difference and the interconnectedness that always-already exist. I suggest that it is through poetic imagination that we can resist the surface understandings of difference, all that we think we understand of difference, and imagine instead the possibility of difference transformed.

Poetics is what Kristeva (1984) defines as infinite possibility, and as such, poetics allows for a critical examination of our ways of knowing and expressing our knowledge of the world by probing the surfaces of our experiences as well as the stories we tell about our lived experiences. Because we use stories to describe our lived experiences, poetics calls upon those that listen to our stories to recognize narratives as human constructions, ones that masquerade in confidences and assurances, all the while attempting to conceal their own fragility and frailty. Poetics invites both the storyteller and the listener to plumb the depths of both the narrative and the words used to tell the story, to explore the infinite possibility of making meaning from our lived experiences. Through poetics we can engage in what Miller (2005) advocates and "explore the pleasure and the horror - perhaps even the necessity of the stories we tell ourselves and

others, the stories that have been told about us...to explore the stories of voice and silence of becoming and refusing" (p. 121). If curriculum is rightly understood as complicated conversation as well as lived experience, then it becomes necessary to examine the stories of our own experience as well as the experiences of others as they give shape to our complicated understandings of our place in the world.

The work of poetics allows us to peer into these stories and open spaces of imagination, thereby offering the potential to embrace both knowings and the generosity of unknowing, to embrace the humility of partial uncovering and partial revelations and "to explore the depths of our own relations to each other" (Miller, 2005, p. 162). By engaging the imagination, poetics exposes both complexities and possibilities, and recognizes "it is the meaning of our experiences and not the ontological structure of the objects which constitute reality" (Schutz, 1967, as cited in Greene, 1995, p. 94). Imagination initiated through poetics is critical, because as Maxine Greene (1997) describes it, "imagination, after all, allows people to think of things as if they could be otherwise; it is the capacity that allows a looking through the windows of the actual towards alternative realities" (p. 2). Through aesthetic knowledge and the imagination, the poetic exposes the grand tensions between the apparent and the concealed, between all that has been concretized and that which insists upon fluidity. It resists the assurances, confidences, rigidity and structures of grand narratives, questioning "the stories that cultures tell themselves about their own practices and beliefs in order to legitimate them" (Peters & Burbules, 2004, p. 11), and scrutinizes the words with which we tell our stories thereby revealing the potential for "mutation, transformation and discontinuity" (Peters & Burbules, 2004, p. 24).

While poetics can be understood as intentional critical examination, it is simultaneously the work of hope, the work of the *not yet*, and the always becoming, the emerging, creative potential of raw materials - be they memories, words, images, traditions, or texts that are framed as histories, autobiographies, or mythologies - raw materials that can be connected, disconnected, interwoven and knotted in ways that perhaps surprise us with the grace of new ways of seeing, and new ways of knowing, and new ways of being in the world. Because our lives are storied, poetics is essential for opening spaces in which we can acknowledge and endeavor to make meaning of our human experiences and the sacredness of becoming, the surprise of discovering, the stumbling upon something precious that was lost, omitted, forgotten, silenced, marginalized, exiled, and othered.

For this reason, I suggest that the poetic is an opening to the Other and stands as the doorway through which I may explore the experiences and expressions of difference and interconnection within community. By exploring the evocative poetics of difference, otherness, foreignness, and strangeness, I may be able to suggest possibilities for curriculum as community building, for how the profoundly Other may find its place authentically interwoven into experiences of community, as well as into my own lived experience. Through the play of story and words, it may be possible to catch a glimpse of the intersectionality as well as the problematics in community, "to claim connections as well as grapple with difference" (Miller, 2005, p. 83). Going a step further, I suggest that to understand curriculum as community building, I must align with Kristeva (2002) who contends that it is our very attentiveness to "the culture of words, the narrative and the place it reserves for meditation" (p. 5) that initiates revolt. Poetic, imaginative

attentiveness to possibility resists the narrow confines of the different as it can be simply understood and sees instead new spaces of interconnection and new forms of commonalities. Thus, to consider curriculum as community building, poetics invites us to see limitations and what may yet be possible.

Difference: The Making of Our Own Strangers

Difference as I have described it through poetics is the imaginative interpretation of the way we know ourselves, the narratives that we use to construct and describe our lived experiences, and the distances that we construct between stories of the self and stories of the Other, stories that are no longer questioned and taken for granted. As I mentioned in chapter two, Biesta (2004), cautions us to remember that "all communities produce their own strangers" (p.313). Therefore, before examining the ways in which curriculum may function as community building in contexts of profound human difference, which is the aim of chapters four through seven, it is of great significance to consider the production of strangers Biesta describes and ways in which we construct human differences. This background of alterity must be laid in before the threads of reimagining community building can be introduced. Who then is the stranger and what contributes to their strangeness, their foreignness, their Otherness? What constitutes difference and what can it mean to be the Other?

Conceptualizations of difference can be seen emerging in the misty twilight of metaphor and myth, storied spaces with narrative power, where our knowing becomes visible, albeit incompletely. Picking up a thread from Luce Irigaray (1985) who proposes that women are understood "as the Other within Western culture" (p. 75), I wish to

recount two stories that may contribute to understanding how and why women may have been situated as the first strangers.

Stories of Eve: created difference

One possible narrative of the emergence of difference may be found in the biblical creation story found in the book of Genesis which recounts the creation of Adam, a man created from the soil by God, followed by the creation of Eve, woman, created from Adam's rib and soil. This narrative raises a number of contested ideas about Eve's relationship to Adam. One poetic reading of this narrative positions Eve as second and lesser to Adam due to her place in the creation order. The woman's creation follows the man's, so she is second to man, his subordinate. Eve's creation order places her in a position of inferiority, and separateness, thus Eve is Adam's Other.

Another poetic reading, also positions Eve as submissive to Adam, because her creation depends upon a piece of Adam's material body, his rib. Eve is created in dependence upon Adam and not created in the same way as Adam, from soil and divine breath alone. This poetic reading is beautified perhaps by signifying that Eve emerges from under Adam's arm at the site of the removed rib. In this interpretation Adam is symbolically positioned to protect and care for her, to place his arm around her, while Eve contains a portion of Adam, and must forever be at his side to complete him. While both are incomplete without the other, Eve can be read as one diminished and in need of protection, as well as the one who brings completion to Adam. He does not complete her. Eve exists as a helper and a symbolic reminder of Adams's wound. Even though Adam is wounded, he must nevertheless protect the weaker Eve.

In yet another poetic reading, rather than God using Adam's rib to create Eve, the word *rib* is translated to Adam's *side* in an early English translation of the *Septuagint* (Mowczko, 2013). In this story, God creates the first man/human as an ungendered whole, the first representation of mankind. It is only following the removal of the man's *side*, or a *side* of the man/mankind, that God actually creates two new creations, Adam, *ish* - the male human, and Eve, *ishshah* - the first female human. According to Mowczko (2013), after the removal of one *side* of man, "the now undoubtedly male human sees the female human and says, "This one is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh! She will be called 'woman' (ishshah) because she was taken out of 'man' (ish), (Gen. 2:23)." This poetic reading suggests that Adam and Eve are equal halves, the two sides of humankind. But even in this equality, there is difference. Eve is not Adam. Adam is not Eve. Both are positioned as different from the other. In all three possible readings of the Genesis creation story, the woman is separated, and removed from the man. She stands close under his arm. She is of man, but she is different.

Rabine (1977) draws upon her reading of Kristeva to explain "in Judaic-Christian and capitalistic civilizations, the unified human subject is male" (p. 44) and that women exist outside of the male body and outside the masculine construct of the state, religion, and culture. The "cleavage between what is considered the superior Masculine and the inferior Feminine is repeated consistently in Western ideologies - ideologies which function through hierarchized dichotomies" (p. 43), furthermore, "the cohesion of the society" (p. 44) depends upon the woman's differentiated position outside the man. The man must enact his superior role and the woman must enact her subordinate role. Accordingly, Kristeva argues that "the woman is what man represses in order to structure

his own identity, and to master the state, religion, and the economy" (Quoted in Rabine, 1997, p. 45). The Genesis narrative of the creation of Eve is a foundational story which gives shape and form to values and beliefs that are manifested in social and cultural understandings and norms of behavior that are variously interpreted and transmuted through the world's three largest religions, Judaism, Islam and Christianity. The story of Eve is a dominant narrative of the origin of gendered difference.

The story of the Danaides: socially constructed difference

Another narrative of the origin of difference is uncovered by Julia Kristeva (1991) as she looks back to early Greek mythology and traces the first strangers to the story of the Danaides. The story of these fifty women is constructed as in a complex journey that begins when they are compelled to leave their homeland by the forces of marriage, procreation, love, sex, power, conquest and ownership. Because the women must leave home to marry, they become the first foreigners. Kristeva (1991) suggests that to understand foreignness, strangeness, and difference, one must understand the stories of the women who were chased, wooed, or forcibly married into foreign lands. Rather than marrying inside their homeland, as had previously been the exclusive norm, these women were forced to leave home, and arrive as strangers to be presented to their husbands as brides, but nevertheless, as strangers.

A significant component of the myth of the Danaides is that their father is aware that the women will be seen as strangers and barbarians to their husbands because of their incomprehensible language, their unknowable babble. Kristeva (2002) explains that, "the human being is a speaking being, he naturally speaks the language of his people: the maternal language, the language of his group, the national language" (p. 240), and

likewise the father of the Danaides, recognizes the challenges and hardships his daughters will encounter when speaking their mother tongue in their new land. The brides will continually stand as reminders of the unknown people from whom they came. Like an outward mark, a brand, or identifying symbol, "language [is] a remains of belonging" (Derrida, p. 89), and the women will continually declare their belonging to another people group, to a strange and unknown mother to whom they are bound by their words. The father knows their foreign language will signify their difference, as will their foreign dress and foreign manners. He admonishes the brides to uphold rules of modesty to compensate for their difference, believing that in demonstrating humility, deference, and supplication to the governance of their husbands and the laws of the hearth, the brides may be made to appear acceptable in spite of their unknown/unknowable language (Kristeva, 1991). While the women are made into foreigners by their departure from their homeland and their arrival in a new land, the ultimate marker of their strangeness is their foreign language, the unknown speech that renders the women unknowable. The stories of their lives are incomprehensible; thus, they are unknowable. Their lives are rendered foreign by the language through which the stories of their lived experiences are told.

The Poetics of Difference in Productions of Language and Story

Derrida (2000) suggests that the foreign being, with his (her) unknown language is made completely questionable, unknowable. Their lived experiences cannot be understood. As a foreigner, the individual occupies a position of difference; he (she) is a question of *being*. By focusing on a foreign and unknown language which renders the foreign speaker and her story ultimately unknowable, Derrida pivots from a linguistic difference to an ontological difference, suggesting that there is a fundamental difference

in the nature of *being* between those with a known language and their stories and those with an unknown language and the incomprehensible stories of their lives.

In this context I suggest that the foreign language need not be narrowly defined as the language of a nation or ethnic group, but that foreign languages can and do emerge in the representations of distinct ways of being in the world that are made manifest through language and the stories that we tell. Thus, there may emerge a foreignness of language and foreignness of story between generational groups, between gendered groups, between family groups, between religious groups, between cultural groups, between groups formed by class and opportunity, between one individual and another due to their distinct and disparate lives, memories, or curricular journeys. In following Derrida's logic (2000) these individuals, with their foreign languages and foreign stories are rendered questionable or unknowable, and marginalized as different *beings*. Similarly, Todd (2003) draws upon Levinas to state definitively that the "understanding of the Other as that which manifests an ontological difference (rather than a socially defined one)" (p. 80). In this way the one who is foreign or strange, or different, is seen as a different *being*, not just someone rendered different by social constructions. It strikes me as an important distinction that Derrida, Kristeva and Levinas do not argue that linguistic difference is the same as human difference, but rather that differences in languages, in any way we can conceive of one's language and through which we construct and share our stories, these storied constructions of our lived experiences, either knowable or unknowable, it is the *stories* constructed of language that renders an individual as the foreign one, the strange one, the different one, the unknown Other. It is a poetic space to

consider that difference and otherness partially resides within constructions of language and story.

The story of the Danaides reflects the ways in which an ontological difference, a difference of being, can emerge in the removal from home, in an unknowable language, and one telling unintelligible stories. Biesta (2004) explains that "the stranger... is never a natural category" (p.323), instead, difference, foreignness, strangeness and otherness is a human construction, manufactured in story, myth, language, and traditional/mythological/historical understandings of the worlds we inhabit. Both the stories of Eve and the Danaides are foundational texts, and as such they contribute to an understanding of women as the first strangers, as the first of the different ones.

Volf (1996) contends that we have skewed perceptions of reality and that social and spiritual deformities force us to focus on our limited resources, and that these struggles skew our interactions with difference towards fear, anger, control and exclusion. Hershock (2012) also identifies that in our contemporary historical moment, we are

> compelled to consider not only state-centered political differences, class-based socio-economic differences, and the possibility of underlying differences in explicitly held values and claimed interests, but also patterns of difference reverberating within and across such complex and densely interwoven domains as morality, gender, ethnicity, culture, religion, and historical experience. (p. 25)

Beyond such frameworks, a poetic examination of possible origins of difference in the stories of Eve and the Danaides suggest that in addition to the deformities addressed by Volf and Hershock, that language, words, and story also give shape to conceptualizations

of difference. Therefore, perhaps it is also through language, words, and storytelling that we might reimagine difference and draw upon poetics to re-tell or re-read our stories and see interconnections where once we saw only separateness. Curriculum as community building requires us to engage our poetic eyes and recognizes these distorted and skewed perspective, to see more, to tell more, to engage what Maxine Greene (1995) calls our social imagination, which is our "capacity to invent visions of what should be and what might be in our deficit society, in the streets where we live and our schools. Social imagination not only suggests but also requires that one take action to repair or renew" (p. 5). From story we may gain access to understandings of the world as it is and has been, and by utilizing our social imagination, we can step into spaces of change and transformation. It is these spaces of transformation that I will explore further in chapters four and five, considering how a curriculum as community building may emerge in time and space.

The Words of Women: Imagination, Storytelling and Pain

Once again, my own autobiography emerges here as a thread to contextualize my critical analysis of the ways in which stories of the self traverse the "fault lines" (Fowler, 2006) between the self and the world and become sites of critique and reimagination, sites where the lived experiences that are curriculum may be examined. I return to my story, picking up the thread when I moved up from my mother's kindergarten class to first grade and Miss Hawkins was my teacher. She was young, and kind, and very pretty. I still remember her stylish short dark hair and her short skirts. Some months into the school year, my mother was called in to meet with Miss Hawkins. My teacher had a growing fear that I had learning disability. I was not completing my work and when the

teacher asked me questions about my work, I seemed confused about what I was to be doing. I imagine that Miss Hawkins must have observed my drifting focus from the worksheets or independent desk work that I was to complete alone while she worked with small groups of students in reading circles. She could easily watch me because my desk was very close to the reading group. After the teacher shared her concerns, my mother asked some questions. Because my mother was surprised with this report and its disconnection from what she had observed when she was my teacher the previous year, my mother asked to see some of my work so they could identify if there was some pattern to my struggles that might be evident in my work.

Just as the teacher had described, page after page of my work had a few words written near the top of the page and the rest of the pages were blank, except that for around the edges of the worksheets I had drawn little birds, animals, flowers, and trees. At home my mother asked me about my work and showed me one of the pages the teacher had sent home. I told her story after story that I had listened to from the reading groups and showed her the pictures I had drawn of the animals in the stories, pointing to the birds and rabbits and flowers, like my own illustrations or illuminations in the margins of the text.

Instead of a learning disability, I had disclosed my love of stories and my storied imagination. Because my desk was close to the reading circles, when each group worked with the teacher and read, I was more interested in their stories than in my worksheets. The next day my seat was moved away from the reading groups and I always completed my work. I was a faithful student, eager to please my pretty, young teacher, eager to do things right, to follow the rules and meet the expectations. But to what loss? What pain?

Silenced Stories

My story uncovers my childhood affinity for the imaginal, for story and the ways in which living in the poetic space was incompatible with the ordered structure of schooling. To be successful in school I had to be removed from the world of imagination, so I would not be distracted by stories and drawing pictures of talking creatures, and could better focus on my work. My story illustrates the intersection of imagination, storytelling, loss, and pain.

I vividly remember reading Madeleine Grumet's book (1988), *Bitter Milk*. In her chapter titled *Redeeming Daughters*, Grumet recounts the childhood memories of Agnes Smedley and Zora Neale Hurston to "discover how our daughters redeem us" (p. 157). Not only did I find my own story embedded in the narratives she retold, but I found myself reading with tears in my eyes as I saw the twisting thread of loss, removal, pain, silencing, lies, and the unknowable language of imaginative girls made strange. Grumet (1988) examines two stories to understand how the spaces of storytelling may become contested spaces of self-revelation, difference, pain and power. In the first, Agnes Smedly as a young girl tells her mother that,

> the wind in the tree tops really carried stories on its back; the red bird that came to our cherry tree really told me things: the fat, velvety flowers down in the forest laughed and I answered; the little calf in the field held long conversations with me. (Grumet, p. 158)

Grumet (1988) tells a second very similar story which is recounted by Zora Neale Hurston as her own memory.

> I came in from play one day and told my mother how a bird had talked to me with a tail so long that while he sat up in the top of the pine tree his tail was dragging the ground. It was a soft beautiful tail, all blue and pink and red and green. In fact I climbed up the bird's tail and sat up the tree and had a long talk with the bird. He knew my name, but I didn't know how he knew it. In fact the bird had come a long way just to sit and talk with me. (p. 159)

Not only do I read my own autobiography in these stories, but I clearly see the fault-lines that determine which stories and which languages are legitimized. Grumet (1988) explains that the threat embedded in the girls' stories and the reason the mother and grandmother renounce "the world of talking birds" (p. 160) is because "their songs are too familiar and threaten the defenses that these women have developed to tolerate loneliness and to live in a world that divides culture from nature, domesticity from mystery, private from public" (p. 160). The silencing of the girls' stories occurs to protect the mothers from the pain of remembering their removal of the communal poetic world, and the pain of their own silencing, to protect them from the pain of losing their mother tongue, the language of their girlhood, the language of storytelling and imagination. As the girls describe the world they imagine, "they reveal the world that we fled because we were not brave enough to pitch our tents and raise our flags there" (Grumet, 1988, p. 162). Grumet explains that these two stories reveal not only the imaginative storytelling language that can re-see, re-imagine, and re-name the world, offering possibilities for new ways of interconnected being in the world; but the two stories also illustrate how the storytelling language that has been forcibly "surrendered to the gendered ego identities that circumscribe our worlds" (p. 160). According to Grumet (1988),

> Kristeva argues, if the lies of the daughter encode the closeness to nature, to the other...then those fibs and stories speak another way of knowing and being in the world, one that runs under the symbols of conventional knowledge and discourse...For if we can listen to their birds and swim in their lakes we will recapture a glimpse of the possibilities our histories have denied. (p. 161-162)

The silencing of this language of imaginative storytelling is steeped in loss and pain. It calls out for reclamation, to relearn this lost or stolen language, even if it is a language we may not remember.

Words, Discourse and Buried Pain

Early in my doctoral studies I remember turning in a draft of a paper to one of my professors and it being returned with recommended edits, a few questions, as well as one personal note to me. "There is great pain in your writing" (Moon, personal communication). I was stunned and immediately there were tears brimming in my eyes. Where did this instantaneous emotional response come from? Is there truth in this revelation? I quickly wrote two questions to myself in the margin of the draft so as not to forget my surprising emotional response at his comment. *Is there pain in my writing? Why is it there?* Before Seungho Moon's note to me, I would not have seen the pain that is stitched into my writing. Perhaps this marginalia, the dialogue in the margins, speaks to the shared effort of unearthing the lost stories that we may not remember, the losses of other's stories that speak the name of our own buried pain.

Kristeva (2002) employs an evocative metaphor of buried pain when she reflects on the submersion of her own native language beneath the French language that has replaced it. She writes,

> I have not mourned the childhood language in the sense that mourning completed would be detachment, a scar, or even oblivion. But above this hidden crypt, on this stagnant and swamplike reservoir, I have built a new dwelling that I inhabit and that inhabits me. (p. 243).

The loss of Bulgarian, her mother-tongue, is described vividly in the words of death and decay. Perhaps there are similar descriptive words that could be used for the loss of the imaginative language of storytelling, the loss of speaking birds, and sketched animals on the margins of the paper.

The uncovering of pain, the searching for lost stories is not fruitless work, instead, Grumet (1988) suggests that it is essential work, for "as we study the forms of our own experience, not only are we searching for evidence of the external forces that have diminished us; we are also recovering our own possibilities." Or as Hongyu Wang (2005) writes, "the path to breakthroughs to new understandings and enlightenments in the loss lies not in denying the pain, not in overcoming the loss once and for all, but in carving out meanings through trauma so that life can still go on" (p. 142). The act of unearthing loss and the lost is essential work, because it has the power to open spaces where something new can emerge. Sherna Gluck (1977) contends that,

> refusing to be rendered historically voiceless any longer, women are creating a new history - using our own voices and experiences. We are challenging the traditional concepts of history, of what is "historically important," and we are affirming that our everyday lives are history. Using an oral tradition as old as human memory, we are reconstructing our own past…Women's oral history then, is a feminist encounter (p. 3 as cited in Miller, 2005, p. 67).

I believe that to reimagine curriculum as community building, it requires that we make space for silenced voices, for lost languages, new stories and new spaces of coming into understanding, and discovering "a strength through vulnerability, a strength with tears, a strength in a mindful tenderness for the sorrow and fragility of human life" (Wang, 2005, p. 142). Perhaps in reclaiming new traditions of storytelling and offering spaces in which to engage in the poetic examination of storytelling, in the lost, forgotten and silenced language of our daughters and their talking birds, they may "offer us redeeming knowledge" (Grumet, 1988, p. 162) and awaken in the mouths of our sisters, mothers, aunts, grandmothers, daughters, and beyond that, in the mouths of our teachers, students, and neighbors, stories that opens the door to our own histories, and to the stranger, and the Other.

The Contested Discourse of Otherness and Strangeness

Having considered the silencing of certain stories and languages and the longing to reclaim and rediscover abandoned histories, imaginations, and narratives for the purposes of experiencing curriculum as community building, it strikes me that through excavating the artifacts of the past, that this effort is both beautiful and painful labor. Perhaps it is an example of what Grumet (1988) speaks of as "the bitter wisdom of this sweet work" (p. xx). It seems that in the work of unearthing and describing what we find, the words that must be employed to tell of this work may be disjointed, familiar yet unsettling, like the broken and de-syntaxed words that are used in dystopian and post-apocalyptic narratives, where authors repurpose language like discarded artifacts of a broken world, jagged or fragile, to reflect the remnants of the civilization that struggles to rebuild after catastrophe.

Any future conceptualization of what curriculum as community building might mean relies upon affirmative ideas of growth, connection, and forms of belonging. And likewise, curriculum as community building must also rely upon the valuing and embrace of alterity (Volf, 1996), for as Hershock (2012) informs me, "it must be acknowledged that new kinds and degrees of difference also open possibilities for forming new Commonalities" (p. 27). Before I move on in chapters four through seven to consider the forming of these new commonalities and the ways in which curriculum as community building may emerge, be cultivated, and described, it is necessary to extend this chapter's aim further and to examine the assumptions of difference. Drawing upon the poetic a bit more and thereby looking with critical eyes at the words through which individual difference not only describe our perceptions of separation but also our always-already realities of interconnection and interdependence (Hershock, 2012; Nagler, 2004; Greene, 1995; Volf, 1996). I suggest that embedded in the complex and complicated discourse within and between the self and the other that the threads of difference as well as interrelationship and interconnection become visible.

While far from universal, some feminists, especially those that align with poststructuralism, experiment with evocative words and poetic discourse as they abandon taken-for-granted assumptions of a stable and unified self, and propose instead an incomplete and strange self that exists in "mutation, transformation, and discontinuity (Peters & Burbules, 2004, p. 24). I suggest that within this poetic examination of their words a new space of imagination may be opened, allowing not only a questioning of the "unproblematized recountings of what is taken to be transparent, linear, and authoritative "reality" (Miller, 2005, p. 51), but an imagination to see beyond exclusion and lean into

embrace (Volf, 1996), and to see beyond a "difference *from,"* but a difference *for"* community (Hershock, 2012, p. 34). It is my purpose to engage in this examination of difference so that interconnections and relationships are made visible and constructed as possibilities. Some poststructural feminists theorize the contested interior spaces of the self, and the stories of the self, as a way of examining the taken for granted "self conscious subject who is said to be self-transparent (Peters & Burbules, 2004, p. 74) and "call attention to constructions of 'identity' as produced and sustained by cultural norms" (Butler, 1993 as cited in Miller, 2005, p. 47). They engage in this theorizing through poetic discourse, carefully selected words and narratives that are not necessarily beautiful, but raw, imaginative, revelatory, and open to interpretation.

I must be mindful, in this exploration, to avoid unintentionally essentializing the discourse of poststructural feminist scholars, creating for them a harmonious voice where one does not exist. In acknowledging the tension in articulating distinctive differences as well as the possibility of intersection, I must acknowledge that there are knots that may not be neatly tucked below the surface of the text, the "textile" (Derrida, 1981) which is my writing. It is in this position of attentiveness and reflection, that both explores, interweaves and knots together the strategically crafted words of poststructural feminism, that I may make visible the discourse of the self and the stranger which contributes to curriculum, a space that is both a complicated conversation and lived experience.

Janet Miller (2005) explains that when we look into the mirror of the stories we tell about ourselves, the autobiographical narratives, one does not "see an inscription of her already familiar identifiable self. She finds herself not mirrored - but in difference" (p.224). This statement articulates that our own stories may not reveal the selves that we

can identify, but instead, our stories show us as different, strange, and foreign selves. Said another way, when we tell the stories of our *selves* we must anticipate seeing unexpected and unfamiliar faces peering up at us from the reflective surface of our autobiographical narratives. According to Kristeva (2002), this exploration of our narratives and the words we use to tell our stories works "to estrange oneself from oneself and to make oneself a smuggler of this continually recaptured strangeness" (p. 254). This continually recaptured strangeness as it is represented in words and stories captures my imagination, and it is the thread that I follow going forward in this chapter, tracing its weaving path through the writing of a number of poststructural feminists. While the thread of an estranged self is what initially catches my eye, as I bend down to examine it closely and pull at it, like a web, other threads respond and bend with their interconnection. Thus, this discourse of estrangement does not serve an examination of subjectivity alone, as some have pursued it, but rather it serves the ways in which discourses of estrangement are interwoven with expressions of interconnection, commonality and community.

Of Fragmentation, Transformation and Interconnection

When I first became attentive to the vulnerable discourse used by some poststructural feminists in their exploration of the self and the self in relationship to the community, I was uncomfortable, but I could not look away. This discourse of fragility and frailty suggested both sharp edges of separation as well as vulnerability and brokenness, like a baby bird with its transparent skin fallen out of the nest, the discolored shell nearby on the sidewalk. In time however, as I collected these words, I began to identify something beyond my initial response of both horror and despair, seeing instead

a humility, meekness, and generosity of unknowing, a gracious space which opened and connected the fragile self to and within the community.

The poetic words that emerge in the excavation of our autobiographies reveal the mystery of our becoming and our belonging which are messy, fractured, and incomplete. According to Grumet (1988), "as we study the forms of our own experience, not only are we searching for evidence of the external forces that have diminished us; we are also recovering our own possibilities. We work to remember, imagine, and realize ways of knowing and being that can span the chasm presently separating our public and private worlds" (p. xv). While Grumet does not write from a poststructural lens, her keen attentiveness to autobiography and invocation of critical searching nevertheless speaks to the way in which our stories unearth both the past and draw lines of sight to the future, revealing our "ongoing sense of fragmentation" (Miller, 2005, p. 148) not only within our self-narratives, but a fragmentation expressed within our relationships to community. Grumet's argument is central to framing how stories of self-fragmentation not only illuminate subjectivity, but also the ways self and other are always-already interconnected. I see in Grumet not only the chasm of separation but the potential of restoration to our communal worlds.

Through autobiography Miller (2005) explains that we discover the spaces that are "permanently open, sometimes unknowable and therefore undesignatable fields of difference" (p. 55). Her words are constructed to reinforce the impossibility of creating unified or seamless wholes of the holes, and instead her words acknowledge, validate and protect the potential of "multiple, intersecting, unpredictable, and unassimilatable identities" (Miller, 2010, p. 64). Beyond insisting upon a gracious space for multiple

identities within the self, Miller (2010) goes on to explain, that even if we could find a glue to bind up these disparate pieces, we should resist that temptation, because

> autobiographical theories at this historical juncture need to evoke fractured, fragmented subjectivity as well as provoke discontinuity, displacement and even estrangement in self referential forms of curriculum inquiry to highlight how (self) knowledge can only ever be tentative, contingent, situated. (p. 65)

We must let the broken pieces lie unmended, yet scrutinize them for their jagged jarring potential, not only for whatever self knowledge(s) may emerge, but for the ways in which imaginative reading(s) of the self are forever tethered to Greene's (1988) concept of the social imagination, where the fragmentations and deformities of society must be bravely acknowledged before any reimaginative work for the purposes of communal regeneration may begin.

Though it is destabilizing, if we can accept "the permeable I" (Gannett, 1992, p. 6, as cited in Miller, 2005, p. 90), and embrace the self as porous, or weak, or fragile, we can resist our perceptions of uncertain instabilities, and take delight instead in the delicate sugar mold constructions of our subjectivities, recognizing that what appears to be hardened skulls and bones can melt in our mouth and dissolve on our tongue, becoming sweet disintegrating borders where the vulnerable self may intermingle with the Other and where new hopeful imaginations of community may be built. Such metaphors and poetic discourse are of great importance because through them it is possible to see and imagine the interconnections and interrelationships between the self and other that already exist, but which are concealed beneath the rigid demarcations of difference as it is taken for granted.

By recognizing that our "subjectivities are never unitary or complete" (Miller, 2010, p. 64) and also that "both self-making and making sense to and with one another" (Hershock, 2012, p. 26) are never mutually exclusive projects, we acknowledge the potential of transformation and multiplicity to reveal selves, always-already imbedded in interconnection with others. Imagining our storied selves as more, and less, and in-between may be something akin to Penelope's metaphoric weaving and unweaving, as day and night her poetic work is revealed, the work of imagining, weeping, longing, and recreating, in "the border states of the mind...the 'not yet' and the already no longer" (Kristeva, 2002, p. 7). Perhaps also bound up in the metaphor of the pictorial images Penelope weaves into the burial shroud, then tears out and re-weaves, are the textiled stories of the self and other which rely upon poetics and the imagination to frame as "sites of permanent openness and resignifiability" (Miller, 2005, p. 219), where the self, real but continually imagined, is constantly becoming (Greene, 1988) and knotted up in continually shifting interconnections with the other. Butler (1993) proposes that we are subjects who are "irreducibly multiple" (as cited in Miller, 2005, p. 47). Therefore, as subjects always in resignfiable relationships of multiplicity with the self and the other, we reside on the threshold of hopeful possibility. Rather than the chaos of instability, such a poetic perspective invites the potential of new forms of connection, both within and without. For as Nagler (2004) suggests, "everything that exists 'out there' exists 'in here' as philosophers say, i*n potentia*" (p. 267). Situating potential is no small task, and a future of curriculum as community building depends upon the ability to cultivate and embody this potential, two themes that will be further explored in chapters four and five.

The poetic and poststructural discourse are of vital importance for they illuminate the fragmented yet interconnective potential, or what Greene (1988) identifies "as the gaps between what is and what is longed for, what… will some day come to be" (p. 129). The words that we use to tell the stories that we tell about ourselves and the ways we describe our differences one from another cannot be left alone and unattended as undisturbed artifacts, or self-contained narratives. We must invoke poetics and engage in works of critical examination to reveal the threads that we trace with our fingers, to marvel, or stand in shock, at the other stories and identities that are revealed or concealed; "the stories of self and other that can't be easily identified with or contained within one linear transparent rendering or reading" (Miller, 2010, p. 65).

Examining the discourse of vulnerability, fragmentation, fragility, unpredictability, multiplicity, openness, porousness, and transformation used by some feminists is a purposeful labor, just as Grumet (1988) contends, "we work to remember, imagine, and realize ways of knowing and being that span the chasm presently separating our public and private life" (p. xv). I intentionally repeat her words here, because it is the revelation of the separations and the differences that also provide the reciprocal glimpse of the communal public life in which we are always-already embedded. By acknowledging divisions within the self, between the self and the world, and between many intersecting selves who have their being in the world, we may reveal new ways of understanding our differences as well as exploring connections across the difference that we have come to recognize, a labor we can come to appreciate according to Nagler's (2004) terms, as the paradox of "unity in diversity" (p. 169).

The Inner Stranger and Approaching an Invitation to Difference

Coming to embrace poetic selves that are different unto themselves is useful far beyond conceptualizations of subjectivity as some have pursued it, revealing instead the ways in which such poetic understandings may bridge the perceived chasms that exist between the self and other. Illuminating the foreignness of our lived experiences and the strangeness embedded within the stories we tell of our human experiences has the effect of spanning the gulf of difference and constructing points of interconnection. For according to Hershock (2012), "difference marks the occurrence of relational potentials—an opening of specific directions for relational change and creativity" (p.28). We are strange beings and through autobiographical work and excavating our own stories, our strangeness may be made manifest and hopeful interrelationships may be revealed, thus constructing a solidarity of difference and a solidarity with difference (Volf, 1996).

Julia Kristeva (1991, 1993, 2002) has written extensively to explain that the stranger does not only reside outside of me, but the stranger also lives within me. Drawing richly from her psychoanalytic perspective and her lived experiences as a foreigner residing in France, Kristeva (1991) articulates that "the foreigner lives within us: he is the hidden face of our identity" (p.1). In recognizing "the foreigners that we all are (within ourselves and in relation to others)" (Kristeva, 1993, p. 47) we find ourselves challenged to see ourselves in this difference, and in difference to discover the possibility of an ethical response to the stranger we encounter in the world. Extending this idea, as individuals come to recognize their own internal strangeness as explicitly interconnected to the strangeness of the other, they are reoriented towards possible experiences of

togetherness around a shared human difference. This bridge of interconnection is an imperative, because according to Hershock (2012), "an ethics of difference in which individuals remain the unit of analysis (however bereft of unified subjectivity and self-identity) is not yet an ethics of interdependence" (p. 33). This bridging interconnection is mirrored in Kristeva's (1991) question when she asks, "how could one tolerate a foreigner if one did not know one was a stranger to oneself?" (p. 182). Turning her question into a statement, her words challenge us to consider that if one recognizes and has compassion for one's own strangeness, is it not possible to extend the compassion for the self towards a compassion for the stranger we do not know. Rather than many different individuals linked dot-to-dot, what emerges from this perspective is instead an interwoven, interconnected, and interrelated web of difference which are "dense and value-rich relational dynamics" (Hershock, 2012, p. 254).

In this formulation, the discourse of incompleteness, otherness, foreignness and difference is indispensable, as it may come to establish a new form of community, one that resists either exclusion or assimilation and conformity by acknowledging "that difference cannot be a simple fact of discrepancy or an essentially static 'relation'" (Hershock, 2012, p.12), but instead "differences mark the opening of new relational dynamics and possibilities" (p. 28). The framework of difference both within the self and the self engaging with others fosters potentials for discovering, recovering, and uncovering expressions of relationality. Similarly, Butler (1993) suggests that each individual's own "unselfknowingness...results in the ethical posture of humility" and a new "kinship of compassion" (as cited in Chinnery, 2006, p. 333). In this way the

compassionate stance of relationship and kinship emerges as the response to the discourse of difference.

In recognizing the mutuality of our difference to ourselves and to others in the world, we may be able to come "to see ourselves in kinship" (Boyle, 2017). Said another way, the fragmentation that I have come to identify in myself allows me to embrace the fault lines and fissures that constitute my unstable and constructed identity, and in so doing it may be possible to open "a fissure in me through which others can come in " (Volf, 1996, p. 51) and to "claim connections as well as to grapple with difference" (Miller, 2005, p. 83). Perhaps my description may come close to expressions of compassion, or the "suffering with" (Nagler, 2004, p. 260), or the question asked by Father Greg Boyle, a Jesuit priest who works in the streets of Los Angeles with youths bound up in gangs, "how can I help the wounded if I don't welcome my own wounds?" (Boyle, 2017). Perhaps Fr. Boyle, Butler, Volf, Kristeva, and Miller are all proposing something of the same order; that we come to a place of compassion that is both a space of welcome for my own fragile divided story of difference and a place of solace that we may offer the stranger who stands beside me, and that the place of compassion is a recognition of our always-already interconnectedness and interrelationships.

According to Levinas (1981), "the relationship with the other puts me into question," both the other within and other without, and "empties me of myself and empties me without end, showing me ever new resources. I did not know I was so rich, but I no longer have the right to keep anything to myself" (p. 52, as cited in Chinnery, 2006, p. 334). Levinas position of emptying and extending is frightening, yet invigorating. Perhaps in being released from the false security and authority of the unified

self and in being shaken awake and alert to our primordial relationality (Hershock, 2012) vast resources of compassion are released making all manner of new experiences of being together possible.

Father Boyle (2017) believes that it is in "compassion that can stand in awe," this awe is not only reverential respect, but fear and wonder. I suggest that in utilizing the discourse of women who comprehend their mythological and historical status as strangers, and in attuning ourselves to their descriptive words of selves that are unresolved and exist in fragmentation, fragility, multiplicity, and transformation, perhaps we may be drawn to inhabit gentler spaces, compassionate spaces, empathetic spaces in which we may be able to embrace the stranger within and the stranger without, embracing a reverence, a fear and wonder of the unknown and of potential. In exploring the *Ethics of Dissensus*, Ziarek (2001) asks, can an "obligation based on respect for alterity and accountability for the Other's oppression...motivate resistance and the invention of new modes of life" (p. 2)? This is the challenge before us. To not only reimagine the possibility of embracing the stranger, but beyond that, to rediscover our always-already interrelatedness, to reimagine resistance, and the invention of new modes of life.

The Problems of Hospitality

Perhaps one of the closest expressions of a compassionate responsibility to the stranger is seen in our efforts of hospitality. To be welcoming, to open the door, to greet and perhaps embrace, to make beds and meals, to open time and space for guests, and in all of the various traditions we are accustomed to inviting others into our home. Most of us have been both the host and the guest, and we have lived experiences that inform the

place of hospitality, and the responsibility of hospitality. Hospitality is defined broadly by Kristeva (2002) as "the capacity of certain human beings to offer a place to stay to those who do not have one or are temporarily deprived of one" (p. 256). And while most of us have experiences of hospitality that have been extended to traveling family and friends, fewer have experiences of opening our homes to strangers, to those who are displaced and deprived of their own home, or homeland. It is this form of hospitality that has been theorized as an expression of ethical responsibility to the stranger and which emerges as a compassionate engagement with human difference - one that is informed by the recognition that difference, foreignness, and strangeness "lives within us" (Kristeva, 1991, p. 1).

Kristeva (2002) writes that the "the minimum definition of humanity…[is] precisely the capacity for hospitality" (p. 257). Her definition of humanity is provocative and hinges upon an act that on the surface is simple and perhaps intuitive, but at the same time threatening. It is one thing to open one's home, beds, and table to those we know, or who are familiar to us in their customs, their appearance, or their language. It is an altogether different proposition to invite inside the stranger who speaks an unknowable language, who abides by foreign customs, whose face I see through the reflective and distorting surfaces of difference, mythology, stories, or lived experiences unlike my own.

In choosing to open my home to the unknown Other I challenge the boundaries of protection that are established between myself and the stranger, the boundaries in place to "ward off the perceived threat of chaotic waters rushing in" (Volf, 1996, p. 78). Thus, it becomes an ethical choice if one elects to traverse these boundaries. Kristeva (2002) explains that,

> the Greeks were not mistaken when they chose the word "ethos" to refer to the most radically human aptitude, now called ethics, which involves making a choice between good and evil but also all other choices. The word "ethos" (from which "ethics" derives) means "the dwelling-place or resting-place of animals"...to give refuge, to welcome, to shelter, to open your doors...as well as your thoughts. (p. 257)

The ethical choice is one that requires not just an instrumental or physical opening of the doors to one's home, though it well may be that, but it requires an ontological opening up, or a relaxing of one's barriers, to encompass a new sense of responsibility.

In attempting to theorize how someone might open themselves to the profoundly Other, I draw upon the powerful and evocative metaphor put forward by Lingis (1994) of speaking to someone who is dying. Lingis describes coming upon someone who is very near death, and in that very human moment the living individual realizes the experience of the dying Other is unknowable – it is an unfathomable human moment. There is nothing that can be shared experientially between the one who lives and the one who is dying. The living one and the one just moments from death are strangers to each other, they are ontologically different. The questions then emerges, what can the living offer to the dying? What can the living say to the dying? How can the living open himself to the experience of the dying? Lingis suggests "it does not matter what words we use – because there are, in a sense, no words. It only matters that we respond, that we take responsibility" (as cited in Biesta, 2004, p. 318). Thus, in that unfathomable human moment of profound difference, the ethical space of hospitality can be opened if the individual accepts the responsibility to speak to the other.

This metaphor highlights the importance of responsibility. Biesta (2004) expands this idea and explains, "when I speak to the stranger, when I expose myself to the stranger, when I want to speak in the community of those who have nothing in common, then I have to find my own voice, then it is me who has to speak – no one else can do this for me" (p. 317). In the problem of hospitality, at the moment of human encounter between two people, it is the individual who is obligated to respond and to be responsible for their actions towards the stranger at their door. Each individual must face the ethical question and choose to speak to the other. The host stands alone at his door and he has the power to engage the radical other by choosing to take responsibility, or not. Through this ethical choice and potential action of hospitality towards the stranger, the host acknowledges his responsibility to the "primordial" (Hershock, 2012) interconnection which always-already pre-exists between himself and the stranger. Mythologies of difference cast long shadows between the host and the stranger skewing perspectives and obscuring the relational ties that connect them. The act of responsibility removes theses shadowy barriers. As this mechanism of responsibility is replicated, patterns of communal interaction are made visible. Hospitality, as an ethical response to the stranger, reimagines the ways in which difference can reorient our perceptions of relationality. According to Herschock (2012),

> what we need is an…organically constituted and affectively rich set of 'the ways people imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations that are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images that underlie these expectations' (Taylor 2004, 25). It is only in the context of such dense and value-

> rich relational dynamics that we are likely to enjoy the trust necessary to open ourselves to being enhanced by the differences of others. (p. 254)

The host who stands at his door and responds to the ethical impulse by accepting responsibility and speaking to the stranger and inviting him inside, opens a space in which the enhancing differences of the other become available to the benefit of all. This comes close to Hershock's (2012) notion of difference *for* community and Volf's (1996) proposition of a solidary *with* difference.

Inhospitable Hospitality: A Paradox

Opening the door and speaking the invitation to the stranger, the language of hospitality (Derrida, 2000) is the first obstacle to hospitality, but new challenges are situated immediately across the threshold. As soon as the stranger makes his way through the door, other problems emerge for the host and the stranger. According to Derrida (2000), "crossing the threshold always remains a transgressive step" (p. 75), and as such it is an act that goes against the law, in this case, it is an act that brings into question the nature of hospitality and brings into focus the hidden laws of hospitality. And herein lies a paradox of sorts, what Derrida (1993) calls *aporia*, the ''existence of an uncrossable border'' (Derrida, 1993, p. 20). Having opened myself and emptied myself in the act of speaking to the stranger, in speaking the language of hospitality, as host I also occupy a space of authority which requires me and my guest to conform to the laws of hospitality. The free invitation to hospitality is not, in and of itself, free, for it is ultimately, bound up in prohibitions and powers of control. This is the tension of hospitality that troubles Derrida (2000). I draw upon Derrida's extensive examination of both the foreigner and the act of hospitality in order to navigate the boundaries over

which we might cross and open spaces allowing for what Ziarek (2000) calls the "invention of new modes of life" (p. 2), which I mentioned previously.

Derrida (2000) labors extensively with the paradox embedded in the act of hospitality, and for my purposes, I will focus on only a few specific components of his reflection on the paradox of hospitality. While Lingis (1994) and Biesta (2004) argue that each individual must operate within a framework of responsibility to speak to the stranger in an act of hospitality, Derrida (2000) intersects this concept by pointing out the paradox of conditional and unconditional hospitality. In contrast to responsibility, the individual who opens the door must have sovereignty to act as host, and to choose to open his home as the host. "I want to be master at home...to be able to receive whomever I like there." It is "my power of hospitality...my sovereignty as host" (p. 55) that must be maintained, protected, upheld. Herein lies the tension. Safeguarding Biesta's (2004) essential concept that it "is me who has to speak" (p. 317) is not one and the same as Derrida's (2000) requirement of safeguarding the "sovereignty as host" (p. 55). One is a free exchange of the self, the other is a transactional and conditional engagement with the Other situated in positions of power.

To be sovereign, one occupies the position of supreme authority, and as such, there are socially, culturally, and politically constructed codes of conduct on which sovereignty can be established. While there may be laws established at the state level, what Derrida (2000) attends to are those rules that are codified in tradition, in something he calls the "contract of hospitality" (p. 21). Derrida (2000) explains that the "law of hospitality, in marking the limits, powers, rights, and duties" (p. 77) lays out a contractual, or conditional, arrangement between the host and the stranger. The contract

(even if it is unspoken) establishes the boundaries that are in place within the home, the extent to which hospitality may be extended, and the boundaries that the stranger/guest may not cross. The law that protects the sovereignty of the host, becomes a law made to "watch over the guests" (p. 85). We could imagine these laws as: feel free to eat anything in the cupboard, but you may not sleep in my bed. You may watch T.V., but you may not use my toothbrush. Hospitality in this conditional construction can never be a free gift. It becomes a construct of power which reinforces and legitimates the foreignness of the other. The foreigner, the stranger, is under the law, governed/governable, limited, restricted, without power, rendered weak, subject to the subjectivity of the host. His strangeness is not invited fully in, but relegated to constructed spaces within the home, a smaller exile, a more palatable foreign land. And therein lies the tension, the paradox, the aporia of hospitality according to Derrida (2000).

> The law of unlimited hospitality (to give the new arrival all of one's home, without asking a name, or compensation, or the fulfillment of even the smallest condition) and on the other hand, the laws (in the plural), those rights and duties that are always conditioned and conditional. (p.77)

The aporia emerges in the space between these two opposing options. As host, either I construct rules/laws of engagement which will govern and mediate between me and the stranger, or I give all that I am and all that I have to the stranger whom I have invited inside.

In opposition to the problem of hospitality that is limited and governed by laws, the host may offer the guest absolute hospitality. Derrida (2000) frames this unconditional construction of hospitality this way:

> Absolute hospitality requires that I open up my home and I give not only to the foreigner (provided with a family name, with the social status of being a foreigner, etc.), but to the absolute, unknown, anonymous other, and that I *give place* to them, that I let them come, that I let them arrive, and take place in the place that I offer them, without asking of them either reciprocity (entering into a pact) or even their names. (p. 25)

In absolute hospitality, the host relinquishes all right to ask the foreigner questions. The host will not ask the stranger his name or to know his circumstances, because he will not require the guest to name himself or "ask for hospitality in a language, which by definition, is not his own, [but instead] the one imposed on him by the master of the house, the host, the king, the lord, the authorities, the nation, the State, the father, etc." (Derrida, 2000, p. 15). The host relinquishes all expectations of lordship, power or control within his home; instead giving his home to the free will of the unknown/unknowable guest.

Derrida (2000) has framed the tension between traditional hospitality, constructed upon a contract between the host and the guest, and absolute hospitality where the host requires nothing and relinquishes everything, as aporia. Derrida suggests that each form of hospitality does a kind of violence to either the host or to the foreigner. In the first case, the foreigner is ever under the rule of law, required to conform to the language of the host and to relinquish his mother tongue, and to conform to the laws of the host and his home. In the second case, the host stands in fear, for he is no longer a host but a hostage in his own home (Derrida, 2000). No longer a beautiful and generous word, *hospitality* deconstructed (much the same with the word *democracy* and *justice*) is a

teeter-totter of potential threat and violence. Nevertheless, the pursuit of hospitality is not abandoned by Derrida (2000), and nor should we. Instead, by holding the aporia, the paradox, the impasse, something affirmative is preserved, and the *yet to come* is made possible. For according to Wang (2005) as she reflects upon Derrida's notion of aporia,

> It is in the very event of exceeding borderlines — an impossible passage — that aporia is experienced. At the moment the edge is overrun, contradictory imperatives and opposite gestures from both sides are fully awakened and thereby bring pressure for an answer. The affirmativeness of aporia through the impossible is implied at this moment of responding to conflicting gestures. To Derrida, the ethics of affirmation, if there is such an ethics, implies 'that you are attentive to other-ness, to the alterity of the other, to something new and other.' This attentiveness is an openness both to the other and to the future. (p. 48)

Because hospitality is contested, it becomes the space in which new future imaginations of community may be explored.

The Hostess

The challenge as I have laid it out is that even if we can embrace the terrifyingly poetic beauty and destabilization of a fragmented stranger within us, something more is still needed to establish a context in which we may, first, bring recognition to the always-already interconnections that bind us to the strangers from whom we have previously only perceived our separation, and second, cultivate engagement with the external strangers that share our lived physical spaces and spaces of being. Hospitality as it has been defined by Derrida (2000) is future focused, and balanced upon the mystery of as yet unsolved problematics. I propose that curriculum as lived experience and as a

complicated conversation picks up these fragments and imagines a different life together, a new belonging, in ways that are open, malleable, and resilient, while continuously resisting the conformities, powers, authorities, and systems that work to homogenize, assimilate and neutralize difference. In the chapters that follow, I pick up the threads of an embodied curriculum that may be situated in times and spaces of emergence. Attending to the intersections of fragmentation and relationality, I suggest that curriculum has the potential to open the poetic and storied spaces of our lived experiences and foster complicated conversations that respond to difference by looking beyond the individual to transformative interconnection and interdependence.

In weaving the threads of this chapter together, my aim has been to depict and describe rather than narrowly define the poetics of difference. Metaphors ask, *is it like this*? And in exploring the poetics of difference, metaphors suggest incomplete interconnections, and instead offer approximations of likeness and meanings that may emerge in the overlap of unlike things. The tension of the *is it like this* is that it never resolves itself into a definite answer or definable space. *Is it like this* holds open a gap, an opportunity, an emerging context that enlarges our imagination beyond the limitations of assimilation or exclusion. The hope of reimagining curriculum as community building emerges within this poetic space.

Reflecting upon the aporia that emerges in hospitality, where can we go from here? Where is home? How can we reimagine home as both welcoming to the stranger within and the stranger without? Drawing upon Clément and Kristeva, Wang (2004) writes, "embracing difference and multiplicity, home becomes a place where people can live together expressing their own uniqueness without doing violence to one another" (p.

9). In this understanding, "home is nowhere in the Derridean sense: home is everywhere, wherever stranger/strangeness, other/otherness, foreigner/foreigners are welcome, regardless of the limitations of time and place" (Wang, 2004, p. 9). The threads I have interwoven and knotted together thus far have created a textile not only of difference, but of ways in which difference may become the opening through which new imaginations of community may emerge; a community not framed according to *soil* or *blood* and the restrictive or conforming customs of inclusion and exclusion as I examined it in chapter two, but instead, community built upon excavating our always-already interconnectedness through nonviolent engagements with difference and to aligning our community building "with sustained and creative differentiation" (Nancy, 2000, p. 59, as cited in Hershock, 2012, p. 250).

Drawing upon the poetics of difference that looks critically and affirms what is to come, upon the stories of women that situate them as mythological Others, and upon the imaginative and contested words women use to articulate their loss, pain, fragmentation and strangeness, I suggest that we turn our attention to the hostess. It seems that the hostess, emerging as she is within this context, may be well situated to navigate the treacherous territory of the exile and to unearth the connections that have been obscured and skewed, to find new paths, or forgotten openings (perhaps scarred or almost sealed), that may lead not only to mutually sustainable hospitality, but to community reimagined. The role of the hostess which I will explore in great detail in the following chapter suggests to me a transformative lived experience, one that is embodied, engendered and which operates within a "gift economy" (Peters & Burbules, 2004, p. 49) and one that may be juxtaposed with authoritative structures. Perhaps in the works of the body we

may discover a hope of community building that resists homogenizing and exclusionary visions of the future.

CHAPTER IV

THE WORKS OF THE BODY

"To resignify the body as a site of knowing is to claim women as knowers."
(Hendry, 2011, p. 66)

"In folk tales the gift is often something seemingly worthless - ashes or coals or leaves or straw - but when the puzzled recipient carries it to his doorstep he finds it turned to gold. In such tales the mere motion of the gift across the boundary from the world of the donor ...to the doorsill of the recipient is sufficient to transmute it from dross to gold."
(Hyde, 1979, p. 56-57)

But First, Curriculum

The first question I encountered as a student of curriculum is perhaps the most central question that curriculum seeks to answer: "what is of most worth?" If curriculum is the point of orientation for the formal and informal educative process, then the question "what is of most worth?" is undeniably a question of values, worldviews, beliefs and desires. Pinar (2012) suggests that curriculum is "what we choose to remember about our past, what we believe about the present, what we hope for the future" (p. 30). Within this temporal and value-laden context, curriculum examines our orienting beliefs and wrestles with the various answers that have developed through time and history, examining how educators and theorists have shaped the curriculum to their ideas about what it "mean[s]

to live a good life and how can a just society be created" (Schubert, 1986, p. 423, as cited in McKernan, 2008, p. 4).

One of the most significant differences of opinion within the study of curriculum is the way that curriculum is viewed as either *a course to be run* or as *the running of the course*. Traditionally, the curriculum has been thought of as *a course to be run.* According to Eisner (2002), "the curriculum of a school, or course, or a classroom can be conceived of as a series of planned events that are intended to have educational consequences for one or more students" (as cited in McKernan, 2008, p. 11). This familiar view of curriculum describes a kind of running track made up of various educative tasks that once completed equates to a measurable outcome. In contrast, the reconceptualization of curriculum (Pinar & Grumet, 1976; Pinar, 1978; Pinar, 2004) shifts the word "curriculum" from a noun to a verb (Miller, 2010) focusing on *currere,* to run, or the running - which is the active and continuous "educational experience as lived" (Pinar, 2012, p. 35), or alternately described by Pinar (2004) as "the educational journey or pilgrimage." These distinctions may appear to some as subtle, nevertheless they illuminate a foundational difference of perspective. Curriculum as *a course to be run*, gives rise to a systematized and instrumental curriculum (Tyler, 1949) that can be predetermined, ordered, measured, standardized, and assessed, what Ted Aoki (1986) called the "curriculum-as-plan." In contrast, if the curriculum is defined as *running the course,* it is opened wide to a variety of inquiries seeking to understand the "curriculum-as-lived" (Aoki, 1986) in the embodied experiences of teachers and learners, both inside and outside of formal schooling.

Curriculum understood from this perspective is "a human project" (Grumet, 1988, p. xv), where teachers and learners "*come into presence* as unique, singular beings" (Biesta, 2004, p. 320) through an interconnected and intersectional exchange. In this way the "curriculum is our key conveyance into the world" (Pinar, 2012, p. 2), and as we run the course we engage in "self-formation" (Pinar, 2012, p. 44) and enact "education as *bildung*, meaning self-cultivation" (Peters & Burbules, 2004, p. 2). No matter how singular or subjective this language may appear on the surface, this formative journey of running the course is one always-already embedded in human relationality and intersectionality. The "curriculum-as-lived" (Aoki, 1986) is necessarily alive with transformative potential for teachers and learners because their running, their journeying, their pilgrimaging is not solitary, but characterized instead by overlap, intersection, and collective becoming - an individual becoming, emerging as it were, entwined with others' becoming.

Summarizing the collective work of many scholars, James MacDonald (1971) describes the reconceptualization of curriculum as a "creative intellectual task that should be used neither as a basis for prescription nor as an empirically testable set of principles and relationships" (as paraphrased by Miller, 2010, p. 28). This understanding of curriculum is essential for the central premise of my theoretical exploration, wherein I propose not a *curriculum **OF** community building*, which implies a strategically organized set of tasks that builds a course that once completed results in community, but very much in contrast, I offer a perspective of *curriculum **AS** community building* that frames curriculum as the illumination of the intersectionality and interconnectedness of our individual journeys of becoming and a cultivation of the possibilities embedded

within the curriculum to give rise and nourish a future human potential that is just, relational, and attuned to the edification of alterity. Curriculum is a potentially generative space of community building precisely because, as "a field both theoretical and practical" (Grumet 1988, p. xii), it captivates our attentiveness to our relational potential and the emancipatory power of our self-discovery and becoming that is always-already intertwined with our responsibility to secure the self-discovery and becomings of others. Curriculum as community building emerges through "the depths of our own relations to each other" (Miller, 2005, p. 162) and acknowledges that "meaning cannot be taught directly, but it can become a communal journey in which each person's path overlaps with others' paths" (Wang, 2005, p. 144).

In the chapter ahead my aim is to explore this idea of curriculum as community building as a lived and experiential and embodied human endeavor, by considering the body of the hostess and her representations of how hospitality may be embodied, which may offer a generative and sustainable juxtaposition with the paradox raised by Derrida that I addressed in the previous chapter. Extending this exploration, I will turn my attention to examine the *gift economy* to consider how patterns of generative exchange are embedded within the curriculum. I enlarge my examination of the *gift economy* to reflect upon how distinct works of the body may bring to light the ways in which the curriculum may be internalized and embodied, thereby opening multidirectional spaces of community building - from within the individual reaching outwards and from the external community reaching towards the individual.

Naming the Knots

There are evocative and historically situated names for knots that are used to tie rope, string and thread. When needing to tie together two separate pieces of rope, string, or thread, one can tie a knot called a *bend*. Some bend knots are named the Albright Special, a Blood Knot, a Butterfly Bend, a Shroud Knot, and a True-lovers Knot. Surely these knots hold tales that intersect the lived experiences of the individuals who first tied the knot, as well as the story of the knot's origin. While many of these knots are used in sailing or fishing, in weaving however, a knot tied between two pieces of thread is simply called a Weaver's Knot. While lacking a poetic name, the Weaver's Knot is nevertheless secure, allowing the weaver to link new colors or new textured threads with confidence and continue weaving; a knot reliable enough, I suppose, that no new knots with evocative storied names have been created to replace it.

Like the end of a thread, the proposition I held open at the end of the previous chapter suggests that the hostess may be uniquely positioned to reimagine the paradox or aporia embedded in hospitality, and that perhaps through the hostess, and in the works of the body which she reveals, we may discover a hope of community building that resists the homogenizing and exclusionary forces that are at work in most communities. It is the embodiment of community building to which I now turn my attention, and for this reason, this chapter is pivotal in the progression of my thesis thus far. Inasmuch as chapter one makes visible the poetic and metaphoric exploration of curriculum as autobiographical lived experience, and chapter two explores the story of community as it has been constructed historically and socially (primarily in terms of the exclusion of difference), and chapter three examines the poetics of difference such that both the

interweaving of oppositional and integrating potentials may be seen in the web of poetic discourses; these first three chapters have considered the broader tapestry, the context, and the spaces in which community has struggled with difference and has identified the difficulty of meaningful integrations of alterity.

Thus, it is in this chapter that I endeavor to tie a *bend* - the knot linking two different threads - and intentionally turn my weaving away from an examination of the problematics of community, and focus instead upon weaving a new textile, one that considers how and why it is possible to understand curriculum as community building. This chapter and the ones that follow reach forward expectantly, the metaphoric shuttle in hand, to weave new patterns and textured layers that illuminate the hopeful *beloved community* as a human endeavor interwoven throughout curriculum. To that end, I here tie a Weaver's Knot, binding together the poetics of difference which emerged in the previous chapter with a new thread, one that considers the ways in which the curriculum, as something that is lived and experiential is also something embodied, and further, to consider the ways in which it may be possible to examine works of the body as essential components to curriculum as community building.

To Be A Hostess

Reflect upon the word *hospitality* for a moment, not as the complicated space Derrida (2000) deconstructed, but in the experiential way we normally think of hospitality, with warmth and generosity. Suspending the paradox that was examined in chapter three, think of hospitality as Kristeva (2002) does, as "the capacity of certain human beings to offer a place to stay to those who do not have one or are temporarily deprived of one" (p. 256). In my mind's eye I picture hospitality, especially as it is seen

through the lens of the hostess, as well-laid tables, festive foods, special drinks, patterns of etiquette, rituals and performance. Or perhaps I picture other practices of hospitality, less formal but nonetheless familiar: the pallet of blankets folded on the sofa or the living room floor, or the frugal sharing of a meal where smaller portions allow one more body to join the table. Or perhaps visitors, stopping by unexpected, a friend or acquaintance, or beyond that, someone unknown who is referred or introduced, and then a quickly washed cup, a pot of tea, a space made at the table (or desk), and the laundry (or laptop) pushed aside. Time made and spent. Just as the hostess can be imagined in many ways, I wonder if it is possible to similarly reimagine the threads of aporia Derrida (2000) exposed in hospitality: the host and the stranger bound up together in the rules of engagement, the codes of conduct, the expectations and boundaries of generosity, the lengths of time, and the making of spaces. I wonder if it may be possible for the hostess to reframe her own expressions of hospitality when she opens her door to the stranger, so that she has the potential to address the tensions Derrida (2000) exposed in a more sustainable way?

For inasmuch as there are laws that bind both the host and the stranger, laws that mediate hospitality (Derrida, 2000), it follows that the rules of the host are similarly imposed through extension upon the hostess - for she is conventionally understood to be a married woman, the one who occupies the home, or who keeps the inn or public house. If the hostess is governed by the will of the master of the house, it is likely that the hostess can be no more free than the host, and if this is true, the aporia extends to her as well. This challenging extension of the host's will is made clear through the simplest survey of the ways in which we conventionally understand what it means to be a *hostess*. A hostess is an arranger of parties and social events; an orchestrator of significant

gatherings of notable people; a gifted cook; a conveyor of etiquette and social norms; a facilitator of conversation and interconnections and society; a homemaker who extends the professional life of her husband or organization; a match-maker or cultivator of romance; and a paid companion for men, or a prostitute. Each of these prevailing definitions of the hostess is embedded within their own distinct constructed codes of conduct, extending the will of the host and the norms of hospitality onto the hostess in her nuanced negotiations of silverware, seating, dress codes, meal service, social introductions, tea service, and the list goes on.

Therefore, if I am to suggest that the hostess may occupy a space of her own, in which hospitality might be understood through other modes of interaction and engagement, the generative potential of the hostess may be better understood once she is considered outside the home and abiding instead in the realm, territory or space of her own body. In this context, the hostess, as one considered not in relationship to her home, but instead considered in the context of the home of her body, if she is to suggest to us new imaginations of hospitality, community and community building, she must be seen as one who is embodied and engendered. In this construction, it is the body of the hostess that becomes the site of knowing and doing, and it is the body that becomes the site of hospitality. Her body, gendered female, is significant, both in its potential for distinct knowledge, as well as in its generative and nutritive capabilities. Moving forward, I suggest that the body of the hostess offers unique possibilities for conceptualizing community building anew.

Problematic Embodiment

We have inherited manipulative traditions which separate the mind from body, and valorize one over the other. Lindblom (2007) succinctly explains that as a consequence of our Platonic-Cartesian heritage, which constructed a "view of the mind as the internal locus of rationality, thought, language and knowledge [and] which is supported by the Christian disregard of the flesh as the locus of sinful desire and irrationality" (p. 4), the significance and value of human embodiment has been marginalized. From these value systems we have come to prioritize the mind over the body and accept as taken-for-granted the Western dualism that makes binaries of the mind and the body. These value systems conceal other epistemological concerns and obstruct the diverse pathways through which we come to know and make meaning of our lived experiences.

Such epistemological distortions and disconnections conceal our embodiment, making it difficult to remember that how we often come to know, and the ways in which the very things that we come to know are not things simply carried in our heads, or hearts, but knowings and knowledge learned through our bodies and carried in our bodies as well. Whatever may constitute our ephemeral selves, our hearts, souls, and minds, they are carried gracefully in the vessel of our physical and material bodies. Thus, rather than the customary binaries and value-laden prioritizations that separate us from our bodies, it is possible instead to embrace what Hendry (2011) uncovers in her historical exploration of female mystics, "an integrated theory of body, soul, and mind as an epistemological framework" (p. 91). Through her exploration of historical narratives, as well as in the work of Womanist and feminist theories, the always-already interconnected

knowing of heart and mind are understood to reside within a body that comes to know as well.

Understanding the body not as a dismissible vessel, but rather as an active and essential site of knowledge production and knowledge conservation, stands in contrast to traditional perspectives, yet is nevertheless affirmed and theorized by Miller (2005) who asserts that the "nerves and skin remember" (p. 202). This feminist perspective is valorized by the extensive psychological research conducted by Van der Kolk (2014) who insists that the body, perhaps even more so than the mind, is both the repository of trauma as well as the site of restoration. Wang (2014) likewise asserts that "the human body is the site for knowing and living and teaching and learning are embodied activities" (p.178); and Jardine (2012) believes that the formation of identity through the work of knowing and memory is a work that is "deeply embodied, fleshy, intimate" (p. 160). While some of these statements may refer to bodies where the gender is unspecified, the emphasis prioritizes knowledge and knowing that both originates and resides in physical bodies, and it is the attention to the body as a credible site of knowledge production that is essential for the explorations of the embodied hostess that follow in this chapter.

The Body of the Hostess

According to Kristeva (2002) the possibilities of attending to the physical body as an epistemological site is the result of the theoretical, social and ethical work of women and which has resulted in "revalorizing the sensory experience (p. 5). To this end, Hendry (2011) moves beyond bodies where the gender has not been specified and proposes that "to resignify the body as a site of knowing is to claim women as knowers" (p. 66), a statement which suggests that perhaps the bodies of women know in new ways,

other ways, different ways, distinct ways - or perhaps that the bodies of women, when taken as exemplars, may lead us to recognize meaningful ways of knowing regardless of gender.

In considering female bodies, Grumet (1988) draws intentionally upon the "body knowledge" (p. 3) of mothers to explore the curriculum that is hidden in the marginalized experiences of embodied mothers and teachers. By considering the unique biological capacities, roles, and possibilities of female bodies, specifically the lived and metaphoric potential of pregnancy, nurturance, and motherhood that are ascribed to female bodies, I contend that the embodied lives of women may contribute to our ability to reimagine curriculum as community building. That through the consideration of the body of the hostess, and her lived experiences as a potential mother and one who is capable of generative possibilities, we may come to reimagine hospitality, finding alternate pathways through which we may open ourselves to the stranger, and to hold the paradox of hospitality in such a way that we may also consider the potential of more sustainable engagements with alterity.

Seeking the Bodies of Mothers: Hidden Narratives

Locating the stories of mothers and their bodies is a challenge unto itself. The physical absence of mothers, both the absence of their material bodies, as well as the absences of their stories and their knowledge is familiar to us. Many fairy tales and children's stories rely upon the trope of the motherless child. *Cinderella*, *Snow White, Hansel and Gretel, Peter Pan*, *Beauty and the Beast, Bambi,* and many others, each tell the stories of children navigating a difficult life journey alone, unaccompanied by their mothers, and often forced or abandoned onto their dangerous paths due to their absent

mother. These tales tell the stories of children, they do not tell the stories of the absent mothers themselves. We are not told the mothers' names. We are not told the story of their lives, or their lived experiences, and we are rarely told the circumstances of their absence. Mostly, the stories of motherhood are absent from fairy tales, even as the motherlessness of the children is central to the story. The wisdom of the lost mothers' life experiences has not changed hands and the legacy of their knowledge has not been inherited.

In historical narratives, Hendry (2011) tells us, "women's experiencing of the world is invisible…[and] predicated on subjugation and erasure" (p. 12). In a storied context similar to this, Grumet (1988) laments the absence of mothers' stories in curriculum, acknowledging that "the curriculum we study is the presence of an absence" (p. xiii). Grumet (1988) goes on to name what is missing:

> the experiences of family life, the bearing, delivering, and nurturing of children were absent from this [curriculum] discourse. Silent too was the language of the body, the world we know through our fingertips, the world we carry on weight-bearing joints, the world we hear in sudden hums and giggles. (p. xv)

My task then is to locate some of these missing threads and raise them to the surface of the textile and to reclaim the stories of mothers and their bodies of knowledge through which the reimagining of hospitality and community building may be possible.

Mother Archetypes and Womanist Counter-Stories

I suggest that Carl Jung's (1968) theory of the collective unconscious and archetypes is a useful starting place for the exploration of the maternal because it relies upon a universal symbolic language from which deeper understanding of the human

experience can be drawn. Drawing deeply from embedded cultural narratives, epics, sacred texts, art, and oral traditions, Jung's archetypes depict some of the embodied roles that women occupy and illustrate patterns of human understanding that are thought to be universal. Such universal understandings are made possible according to Levi-Strauss (1987), because the "symbolic language of myth provides images, motifs, and sacred stories as the foundation of the psyche and culture" (as cited in Mayes, 2010, p. 15). Thus, in turning to archetypes we draw from rich and diverse threads of human knowledge that intersect into powerfully evocative representations.

One of the foundational female archetypes Jung proposed is that of the Great Mother, who illustrates the embodiment of motherhood in her ability to bear young, as well as in her role as caretaker and nurturer (Mayes, 2010). The Great Mother archetype represents ideas of Mother Earth and the source of all life. She is fertile, open, and productive, and such descriptive language speaks of her ability to bring life into the world. The Great Mother is also caring, nurturing and full of compassion, embodying her motherhood in acts of sustenance. According to Mayes (2010), "In Taoist philosophy, the Great Mother is known as Yin, the eternally feminine principle of the cosmos - receptive, fertile, nurturing. She is the "ground" of existence" (p. 105). Her female body generates life, gives birth, and then feeds or nurtures the life she has born. More than common knowledge of what we know of motherhood, this image of the Great Mother is vast, ongoing, cyclical, and extends to understandings of our perceptions of the known universe and our immediate encounters with the natural world. Yet, Jung's (1968) Great Mother also has a dark and devouring side, a shadow self, that is consuming, ravenous, seductive, and poisonous. This dark description of motherhood, while richly evocative is

nevertheless complicated, and challenges simplistic or romantic notions of motherhood. The dual sides of the Great Mother suggest that motherhood is a difficult and disruptive experience, and as such, perhaps it is the tension and the potential for negotiated encounters within the self and with others that may position the mother to lean in to the tensions of hospitality and hold open the potential to address these tensions in generative and sustainable ways.

Jung's (1968) analytical psychology provides foundational images and symbols of women as embodied through procreation, and motherhood, and nurturing. Through his conceptualization of the Great Mother, Jung proposes universal cultural understandings of the way that the woman is made powerful through her body, her biological capacity, as well as her potential for engaging with others in distinct ways in her role as mother. From another perspective altogether, womanist theories contribute compelling expansions to Jung's primordial vision, offering additional representations of embodied women and their potential for reorienting our understandings of an epistemology that incorporates embodiment.

Womanism finds its orientation within the position of double disadvantage and multiple intersections of marginalization that may include race, class, gender, and language. For this reason, Wong and Grant (2014) explain that womanist theories contribute "intellectual, artistic, and spiritual expressions that foreground the struggles, experiences, and voices of women who are the descendants of slaves, indigenous people, and colonized people" (p. 35). The power of the womanist outsider perspective and the creative potential that emerges from a voice that speaks from beyond the margins draws upon the experiences of embodied women living and engaging outside the borders of

colonial norms. The wisdom womanism offers emerges from the place of lived difference and is "based on the counter-stories" and the "oppositional language" (Wong & Grant, 2014, p.35) of their lives. For this reason, womanism expands and enriches our conceptions of motherhood. Wong and Grant (2014) contend that womanist theory "draw[s] strength from stories of...women warriors, healers, and wise women" (p. 35), and in this way it may be possible to view Jung's Great Mother as joined by the fighting/protecting mother, the healing mother, and the prophet mother. These embodied roles of women enrich and expand the ideas of motherhood, suggesting that the embodied role of women may also be to fiercely protect against inequity or justice, to politically or socially heal the community, or to proclaim truths that stand counter to current ideological moments. While Jung's archetype and womanist perspectives are two diverging points of orientation for considering the embodied role of women, what they bring to the surface is an attentiveness to the biological and ontological expressions of motherhood that illuminate the wide range of understandings of motherhood that allow for divergent perspectives as well as those that appear to align with archetypes shared within the collective unconscious. Far from simplistic, the complexity and multiplicity of embodied roles that may emerge in motherhood, and the intersectionality of light and shadow within these expressions of motherhood all contribute to the tensions within maternity, tensions which must be navigated for the potential of relationality.

Motherhood: From Universal to Specific

Whereas Jungian archetypes serves as an amalgam composed of primordial imagery that motivate us "to engage the world in much the same way from epoch to epoch and from culture to culture" (Mayes, 2010, p. 17), it is equally important to

consider the ways in which the physical, biological, and socially constructed bodies of women traverse the mythic realm and engage in concrete lived experiences in time and space. Womanist theories engage in telling these narratives as do other feminist scholars who wrestle with the often-hidden stories of women, their knowledge, and their lived experiences. Turning our attention to embodied stories, my aim is to illuminate the ways in which these lived, bodily experiences in time and space make their own meanings. For according to Biesta (1994), "bodies always already are cultural artifacts, the product of the interaction of flesh and meaning, the body is a terrain of the flesh in which meaning is inscribed, constituted and reconstituted...our body is as much constituted by flesh as by words and symbols" (as cited in Hendry, 2011, p. 97). While the body may be considered as a biological object, it is simultaneously a socially and culturally constructed object. In this way, the biology of the mother's body is always much more than that, it is the carrier of a rich and complex web of constructed and shifting meanings.

In specifically considering women's bodies and their biologic and relational potential, we are simultaneously coming to know the body of the hostess, for through the embodiment of motherhood and through her distinct experiences of conception, birth and nurturance of her child, it may be possible to illuminate nuanced lived experiences that carry metaphoric power. This look at the physical and biological body and its relationality is significant, because as Wang (2004) explains as she draws upon a wide array of feminist scholarship, "the fluidity and plurality of the female body disrupt[s] masculine binaries" (p. 45). It is in this context of disrupting narratives that I propose that the body of the woman, and women's collective bodies may draw us to closer to conceptualizations of the communal body.

Conception and pregnancy: embodied transformation

As I discussed in chapter three, various feminist theorists (Miller, 2005; Butler, 2005; Grumet, 1988; Kristeva, 2002) challenge existing ideas of individuality and interconnectivity and speak to the creative potential of inner life as well as shared life together. These feminists expose and explore the holes in the wholes, and illuminate the porous borders between the self and others. They expose and valorize the interior life of malleable possibility as one that leaves room for future growth, development, and connection by utilizing the metaphoric language of creative interior spaces (Miller, 2005) and fluid borders (Kristeva, 2002) which are imbued with connotations of conception and pregnancy. The symbolic work of motherhood in feminist theory acknowledges each person's own interior strangeness, and the possibility of opening spaces within the self for something new and unknown to grow and come to fruition.

In conception and pregnancy, the woman moves into a space of transformation. Having opened herself in conception, the woman is opened further through the transformation of her sense of self and the transformation of her body. In pregnancy, as the woman's body transforms, her sense of self is similarly altered, and her awareness of interconnection with the other increases as she embraces her close proximity to the unknown within herself and the unknown child that grows inside. Pregnancy is a space of vulnerability, of humbling transformation, challenging sacrifice, and has the potential to open reservoirs of interconnectivity with the unfamiliar as the woman relinquishes control over her self-contained boundaries. Biologic pregnancy resists romanticized visions. It is stretching, uncomfortable and uncertain, and in this way, pregnancy invites (or pushes) the woman to the borders of the familiar, to cross beyond the known into the

unknown physical, mental, emotional and spiritual transformations necessary for the growth, birth, and nurturance of her child. The maternal body is also inscribed with social and cultural meanings that are equally destabilizing and transformative, shifting her understandings of her self and her body as an object of meaning.

As the womb becomes the metaphoric space of embodied transformation for the mother, it also becomes the site of welcoming the unknown other. In conception and pregnancy, the mother carrying her unknown child is made doubly strange. The woman becomes strange to herself, and in the awareness of her own strangeness to herself, she also recognizes and welcomes the strangeness of the unknown other that is taking shape within her, something Kristeva (2002) describes as a "space of interlocking alterities" (p. 67). The openness, the welcome, the embrace of the unknown and of the other, and the recognition of relational potential available in maternity emerges through what Wang (2004) describes as "negotiating between the singularity of womanhood and the relationality of enabling the child's growth towards freedom" (p. 183). Herein we recognize that "motherhood embodies a co-creative and creative relationship that leads to the birth and growth of the other" (p. 183). The metaphoric potential evident in the embodiment of women's pregnancy makes visible the human capacity for lived experiences centered in creative vision and the potential to recognize and welcome the unknown, unknowable, and the strange with the hope for relational, interconnected, and interdependent futures.

The embodiment of pregnancy turns our attention to the womb as the metaphoric site of transformation for the woman as well as the embodied child growing within her. As a counterpoint to the womb becoming a home for the child, the womb as metaphor,

makes of the woman's body a home. She becomes the home that welcomes the unknown mother-self she is becoming, as well as the unknown child to which she is always-already interconnected. Hendry's (2011) historical and narrative exploration of the role of women in curriculum leads her to consider the Biblical narrative of the Virgin Mary and the ways in which her story positions "the body as the womb for 'light'" (p. 77). Such evocative language carries connotations of revelation, wisdom, new knowledge, and emancipation. The metaphoric power of the Virgin Mary's pregnancy narrative is that it "signifies an epistemology of embodiment in which humans are active participants in the cosmos/divine through and in the body" (p. 77-78). Through Hendry's analysis of this exceptional pregnancy, both pregnancy and the body become potential experiential and participatory sites for integration, interconnection, and transformation. Even though the Virgin Mary's pregnancy is unlike other women's experiences, I suggest that the metaphoric power of the womb as the site of light allows us to consider how the womb may be opened to the mysterious other, and in so doing allow for transformation and movement into newly negotiated and illuminated space of creativity and relationality. In this way, through the woman, the hostess, the mother, who opens herself for the hopeful potential of what may emerge, we may catch a glimpse of the home reimagined, as the site of sustainable and generative relationships, which is the beginning of reimagining community building.

Embodied pregnancy carries deep metaphoric potential to consider how the body as a site welcome and shared life together may address the tensions of hospitality in a more sustainable way. The woman's body becomes home to the other inside. While the child is made from and within her body, metaphorically the child is also the unknown

other, an individual yet to be known. Embedded in a reciprocal relationship with her own body and with her child, the mother and child transform together in interdependence. According to Grumet (1998), "as the child realizes his or her form within the woman, the woman realizes her form through the child. They constitute each other for both their essence and their existence" (p. 27). This relational context exposes a mutual exchange, an interdependency, and co-creative potential in which each works upon the other. The mother is a hostess to the child within her, the child is simultaneously her genetic offspring and the yet-unknown other, fully at home within the mother, welcomed and nurtured by the social, cultural, and biological mandates of the body - to sustain, to nurture, to sacrifice, to protect. Such a generative image offers an evocative juxtaposition to the threatening tensions of hospitality. While the mother as hostess carries parallel tensions, the generative construction of maternity suggests the potential to address these tensions in a more sustainable way, different from the implied violence of the host who must insist that the stranger abide by the rules of the home, or else he be made a hostage in his own home. The hospitality of the metaphoric womb that I have explored does not aim to replace or resolve the paradox of hospitality, instead it stands as a tension-filled juxtaposition, and suggests that in pregnancy and maternity there may be the potential to uncover nonviolent, generative, creative and sustainable responses to these tensions.

Sacrifice and strain: the birth of possibility

I have suggested that the womb of the mother can be reimagined as the home the hostess offers to the unknown other, and further extended this reimagination by suggesting that a reciprocal and interdependent relationship between the hostess/mother and stranger/child may be juxtaposed with the tensions of hospitality that previously

existed in erasures, limitations, and contested spaces between the host and his guest. In my efforts to further reimagine hopeful, generative possibilities for hospitality, I suggest that the womb carries additional metaphoric potential. According to Nagler (2004), "in Hebrew, the word for compassion is *rehamim*. It is plural for *rehem*, "womb." In this way, "to have compassion is to be toward someone, in a little - or not so little - way, what every mother is to her own child" (p. 260). This beautiful linguistic imagery ties the work of compassion to the role of motherhood and centers upon the role of the womb. Through the mostly biological act, giving birth, the emptying of the womb, there is an incorporation of physical suffering and pain. Thus, the Hebrew word for compassion, as connected to the womb, also intersects with the Latin and gives shape to our definition of *compassion* which means *to suffer with*. These intertwined ideas connect the symbolic role of motherhood with the ability to endure suffering and to extend compassion. The biological, social, and cultural constructions that give shape to motherhood also contribute to the emergence of suffering and compassion which are similarly bound up in motherhood. Thus, in motherhood, creativity, endurance and compassion are interconnected, embodying an unconventional strength - the ability to uphold and nurture life, to sustain culture, and to offer compassion to others. This openness to the creative potential of motherhood, the ability to embrace the unknown, and to suffer for the birth of the *not yet*, may open deep reservoirs of compassion for the self and for others.

It is important to look critically at my development of the metaphor of the womb as it is tied to compassion and to resist not only gendered perspectives, but also simplistic conceptualizations that gloss over the psychological, social and cultural expressions of motherhood that can render the mother a hostage to her body or her children. Much of

women's experiences has been framed through the obligations of suffering, suggesting perhaps that it is the woman's role to suffer, or perhaps that suffering has diminished worth. However, in my exploration of the womb, and the works of the body which I will address later in the chapter, I seek to push the metaphor of the womb beyond the reproductive biology of female bodies and suggests that the hospitable work of the womb is illustrative of the generative labor of suffering that may be possible – irrespective of gender. Martin Luther King Jr. (1963), for example, explained that "unearned suffering is redemptive" (para. 10), and that the sharing of suffering is integral to the work of nonviolence in which all humanity plays a necessary role. I suggest that this conceptualization of *suffering* as bearing redemptive power aligns with an understanding of *sacrifice* when its definition is drawn from the Latin word, *sacer*, which means to make sacred.

Holding open this complicated context, I suggest that the mother who opens herself to the suffering of pregnancy and childbirth may experience something beyond individual subjective suffering, and instead experiences a suffering *with* - or an integrated relational compassion with herself and the other. Wang (2004) contends that "self-sacrifice is not necessarily negative" (p. 51), and perhaps in pregnancy and motherhood we may glimpse an image self-sacrifice that is generative and embraces the potential of compassionate engagement with the other. Wang (2004) also explains that "women's struggles to get in touch with their own femininity as the source of creation are particularly difficult and painful. However, through pain, weakness, and even pathology, woman as stranger can be more open to others who are particularly marked by other forms of strangeness and marginality" (p. 100). I take this to mean that the intersection

of biological, psychological, social, cultural, and creative possibility in maternity may serve as a conduit for literal and symbolic welcoming of the other into our lived experiences. It is my contention that the embodiment of women in their experiences of motherhood serves as an evocative representation of openness, interdependence, transformation, and suffering which have metaphoric potential for new forms of relationality and community, irrespective of our gender and biological potential to bear children. These attributes of maternity are available to the full spectrum of human experience, including creative activities that give birth.

Derrida's (2000) consideration of hospitality relies upon numerous narratives, one of which is the mythology of Oedipus. I propose another narrative of hospitality through the equally complicated myth, *Leda and the Swan*, to illuminate how difficult, painful stories of motherhood may connect suffering with creativity and beauty. In the fantastical stories of Greek gods and goddesses, Leda a mortal woman is seduced by Zeus in the disguise of a swan and once having gained her favor, she is ravished by him. The product of this strange and unfathomable union is the child Helen and her twin brother, Pollux. This unsettling narrative of motherhood is embedded in aggression, struggle and power. It is a story of conception and motherhood shrouded in suffering, no matter the ecstasy often portrayed on the face of Leda in classical sculpture. What draws my attention in this mythological narrative is the metaphoric power of what Leda's suffering produces. From the psychological trauma of their conception, as well as the sacrifice of her womb, Leda gives birth to beauty incarnate in her daughter Helen, and in Pollux, Leda gives birth to half of the Gemini twins, the Dioscuri, who were understood to be helpers of humankind, especially the patrons of travelers.

Leda's mythological narrative, juxtaposed with that of Oedipus, offers a redemptive hope of hospitality. True, both narratives are problematic in their violence and estrangement, but whereas Oedipus responds to the violence within his own narrative by blinding his eyes and exiling himself, Leda's maternity instead gives birth to a rich expression of compassionate potential beyond itself. This is a complicated reading and far from a simplistic moralizing of how something "good" emerged from something "bad." Rather, the birth of beauty and compassion emerge from Leda's suffering and suggest that hospitality need not only produce hostages, but that hostesses, even those submerged in contexts of violence and patriarchal will, may give birth to creative and unknown future relationships with the unknown other - producing relationships that are enriching and empowering for humanity.

The Maternal "Economy of Gifts" [5]

Leda's story is disquieting because it asks us to negotiate between the violence and horror of Leda's narrative of maternity with the beautiful and life-affirming children she bore. In Leda we recognize the uncomfortable tension and distasteful exchange of something sustaining emerging from pain, and this is a problematic economy that cannot be reconciled. In the narrative of the Virgin Mary, however, we discover another narrative that similarly explores the generative potential that may emerge when the self is opened to Other. Earlier in this chapter I drew upon Hendry's (2011) examination of the Virgin Mary, and here I wish to add a few elements beyond those she raised in order to offer a counterpoint to the violence in Leda's story while illuminating the generative

[5] The word *economy* is problematic in that it is freighted with structural conceptualizations of power, market values, and systems of production. The discourse of economies is disrupted through the creative play of gift-giving.

potential of self-sacrifice.

In the Virgin Mary's story, the context of maternal sacrificial giving is evident. Unlike Leda, Mary is approached by an angelic messenger who invites her to participate in a miraculous conception. Mary hears that she was chosen by God to become a mother and carry the divinely conceived child. Though she is a virgin and perplexed at how this conception can occur, Mary accepts the invitation, saying, "may it happen to me as you have said" (Luke 1:38). By welcoming inside the ultimate stranger, the child of the invisible God, the Virgin Mary embraces a transformative experience, not only in her maternity and the circumstantial hardships that follow, but by embracing the mystery of giving herself to something beyond herself and to the potential fruit of her womb. In her self-sacrifice or "self-donation" (Volf, 1996) and through the suffering and pain of childbirth, the Virgin Mary embodies compassion for humanity in her hope of participating in the emergence of the promised deliverer, the one through whom human redemption will be enacted.

Leda and the Virgin Mary's narratives are divergent, however they both suggest that certain kinds of self-sacrifice may open generative spaces. I am not suggesting that self-sacrifice is essential to the maternal body, nor am I suggesting that compassion must always be self-sacrificial. Instead, I contend that compassion emerges in complex relationality with the other, and that this complexity is made visible in the metaphoric rich context of maternity. While compassion may emerge in self-sacrifice, it may also emerge as a suffering *with* the other; and similarly, while suffering may be embodied in maternity, it has the potential to emerge in all other complex human relationships. In this way, I align with Wang (2004), who explains, "compassion, rather than hostility, toward

the other becomes a cornerstone upon which a community connected by love and destabilized by freedom can be built" (p. 100). Such a negotiated space is challenging and uncomfortable. According to McAdams (2016), "contemporary Americans distrust… selflessness and compassion" (p. 126), therefore standing in sharp contrast to an economy of self-protection, self-security and self-control, an economy constructed upon sacrifice and giving relies upon a perceived imbalance that prioritizes vulnerability and openness as a way of personal and collective enrichment. For these reasons, I extend my consideration of embodied maternity and link it to an examination of the "gift economy" to suggest that contrary to exclusionary practices embedded in the boundaries of most communities, the relinquishment of the self through sacrificial giving may instead make new avenues of hospitality and community building possible.

The "gift economy" has been studied by sociologists to understand divergent orientations for social engagement as well as the ways gift-giving and sacrificial acts construct bonds of relationship (Mauss, 1967; Hyde,1979; Sarbanes, 2009). Such research considers in part how some indigenous, pre-capitalist cultures have functioned without money or markets and utilize an economy of gifts based on "a triple obligation of giving, receiving and reciprocating" (Vaughan, 2010, p. 453). Drawing upon the work of Mauss (1967) who studied the gift economy of the Kula and Massim tribes of New Guinea, Hyde (1979) explains that "a man who owns a thing is naturally expected to share it, to distribute it, to be its trustee and dispenser" (p.44). This natural expectation of giving and sharing aligns with the embodied experiences of mothers in caring for and nurturing their children. For this reason, Vaughn (2010) explains that

> women scholars have begun to recognize the mothering aspect of gift

> economies…[such that] maternal gift giving can be seen as the unilateral satisfaction of needs, made necessary by the biology of dependent children, who are unable to give back an equivalent of what has been given to them. (p. 453)

Both the lived experiences of mothers and some indigenous cultures demonstrate patterns of engagement in which relational bonds are created and reinforced through gift giving and sacrifice.

The "gift economy" suggests a generative exploration of hospitality. Whereas the host must negotiate the governance of the home in relationship to the stranger or else be made a hostage, the economy of gifts suggests that one may give away the house, and though this may be "a difficult gift" (McAdams, 2016, p. 126), it is simultaneously a generative and reproductive action that does not stop with the stranger. In his study of the gift economy, Hyde (1979) reflects on fairy tales and other narratives recognizing that,

> such stories say that the gift always moves in its circle from plenty to emptiness. The gift seeks the barren and the arid and the stuck and the poor...If the gift is alive, like a bird or a cornstalk, then it really grows, of course. But even inert gifts, such as the Kula [tribal] articles, are felt to increase in worth as they move from hand to hand. (p. 54)

In the gift economy there is an understanding, according to Hyde (1979), that "a cardinal property of the gift: whatever we are given should be given away again" (p.35), and that "when you give a gift there is momentum and the weight shifts from body to body" (p. 40) extending the sacrifice and the gift beyond two individuals into a wider interconnected circle. In this way, sacrificial gift-giving may become a relational

enactment, each individual extending the gift and never standing as the sole or ultimate possessor of either the sacrifice or of the gift itself.

Such circular sacrifice and circular giving interrupts conventional expectations of equilibrium and instead cultivates relational connectivity. Hyde (1979) explains, "we commonly think of gifts as being exchanged between two people and of gratitude as being directed back to the actual donor. 'Reciprocity,' the standard social science term for the return gift, has this sense of going to and fro between people (the roots are *re* and *pro*, back and forth)" (p. 44). But in the gift economy, as it is illustrated in fairy tales and other stories, the gift must move beyond the two points of the giver and the receiver into a circle of gift exchange which must have more than two people. This circular pattern is essential to the gift economy and contrasts with reciprocal giving. According to Hyde (1979), as

> the gift moves in a circle no one ever receives it from the same person he gives it to....[and as] the gift moves in a circle its motion is beyond the control of the personal ego and so each bearer must be a part of the group and each donation is an act of social faith. (p. 45)

This description illuminates the way in which the gift economy and the circulation of gifts is a "transitive, bond creating, communicative process" (Vaughan, 2010, p. 453). Just as in the previous section where I suggested that in pregnancy and motherhood we may glimpse an image of self-sacrifice that is generative and embraces the potential of compassionate engagement with the other, so too in the economy of gifts, the circle of gift-giving extends and shares both the sacrifice of giving as well as the benefit of receiving, thereby cultivating relationality and generative interconnection with others.

The gift economy suggests that, even when there is sacrifice or suffering, the gift of hospitality can be given away, and once the circle of giving is extended to the stranger, the mystery is that the stranger gives the gift forward to another and another. In this way the act of giving is one of creation, because it exists within the framework of relational encounter rather than transactional exchange. This is an economy foreign to the world in which we live. This "wider spirit" (Hyde, 1979, p. 84) sounds a thing of fairy tales and myths, does it not? However, in a study of the gift economy manifested in the American Shaker community, Sarbanes (2009) described this circle of gift giving and the way that it produced what Hyde (1979) described as "an ongoing and generalized indebtedness, gratitude, expectation, memory, sentiment - in short, lively social feeling" (p. 84, as cited by Sarbanes, 2009, p. 126), a feeling that contributed to an alternative expression of human interconnectedness, responsibility, and participation.

My argument has been that in the embodiment of motherhood - in pregnancy, in childbirth, in the transformative metaphoric space of the womb - we come to see the role of women as hostesses, welcoming strangers, as well as our own strangeness, into our bodies and lived experiences in such a way that these expressions of motherhood enable us to catch a glimpse of how else hospitality can be imagined. Like the fairy tales that enable us to see the world through the eyes of magic and mystery, motherhood shifts the lens and enables us to see with new eyes the generative potential of sacrifice. The physical suffering of childbirth, the psychological disorientation of the self stretched into new modes of interconnectedness, the social and cultural reformulations of the meaning of woman and mother and body, are layered tensions that are tied to the potential relationality with the child and with the world. The sleep-deprived mother, the crying

child, the leaking of milk, the subsuming of desire and identity and meaning in the dark hours of the night, all embody the physical, psychological, social, and cultural suffering *for* and suffering *with* of motherhood that is the *rehamim* of compassion and sacrificial gift-giving. The lens of motherhood allows one to hold together the tensions of sacrifice alongside the yet unrealized relationship with the child which will emerge. In motherhood, we may come to see hospitality not only as a paradox - a thing balanced on the edge of aporia, but also as a thing carried inside the body or on our hips, those "weight-bearing joints" as Grumet (1988, p. xv) called them. In the sacrifices and gifts of the body perhaps we may be able to reimagine hospitality through the hostess and mother (biologically, socially, and culturally constructed), and consider how the beautiful perils of sacrificial giving may also welcome us home, our very selves transformed in the process. Perhaps we may also recognize the contrast Mary Aswell Doll (1995) constructed between the "mother-world of implicit link" and the 'father-world of explicit law" (as cited in Wang, 2004, p. 13) and how embodied maternity and the maternal economy of gifts illuminates interconnection and relational potentials.

Hyde (1979) tells us that "gifts mark or act as agents of individual transformation.… Sometimes the gift itself actually brings about the change, as if it could pass through a person's body and leave it altered" (p.33). This rich descriptive representation of the gift illuminates the transformative power that is awakened in acts of giving. In becoming an embodied vehicle of sacrificial giving, I suggest that we are enacting hospitality and making it possible for hospitality to be reciprocated again and again - from me to you, from you to me, from one to another, onwards, outwards, inwards, in a multi-directional, multi-responsible mysterious circle of communal

responsibility and relationality. Perhaps in this we may begin to glimpse hints of curriculum as community building, wherein both "personal and social reconstruction" (Carson, 2014, p. 139) emerge in "an active unfolding of the course of life (p. 139).

The Gifts and Works of the Body

The womb has served my thesis as a meaningful starting point for considering the works of the body because it is a biological site, a *natural* site, where it is easy to conceptualize transformative potentials as well as the openness to the other. But the work of transformation, the work of opening oneself to the other in hospitality, and ultimately the work of community building is not limited to maternity nor to the female gender. Community building is inclusive, equitable, and expansive work. For this reason, I wish to consider three other distinct embodied sites and reflect upon the potential works of the body that occur there, and while they are not gender specific, they nevertheless extend the metaphoric work of the womb I have presented. To this end, I propose the work of the body as it is evident in the eyes, the ears and the mouth - three embodied sites which serve as parallels to the metaphoric womb in their potential to be opened to the other, as well as sites ripe with transformative and creative potential, sites where the curriculum is alive with what Aoki (1999) describes as "a generative space of difference, an enunciatory space of becoming, a space where newness emerges" (p. 35, as cited in Jones, 2014, p. 18).

If the curriculum is rightly understood as "educational experience as lived" (Pinar, 2012, p. 35), or "the educational journey or pilgrimage" (Pinar, 2004, page), then it is necessary to consider the material physicality of the curriculum, in much the same way that Miller (2005) describes praxis as the way theory is enacted, practiced, embodied. For

after all, "it is through our bodies that we live in the world" (Merleau-Ponty as cited in Grumet, 1988, p. 3). It is my proposition that curriculum as community building is lived and embodied, and emerges through the gifts and works of the body and in time and space. The consideration of time and space and the emergence of curriculum as community building will be my focus in chapters five and six, but for now, I turn my attention to the works of the body as manifested through the eyes, ears and mouth.

The Work of the Eyes

In considering the gifts and works of the body through the eyes, ears and mouth, I recognize that I enter a tricky bit of stitch-work in my weaving. In understanding that the eyes are the physical organs of sight, and that they receive visual signals and impulses that are then translated by the brain into images, and that these images are further constructed into objects of meaning. I recognize that it is challenging to tease apart the nuanced interconnection between the work of the embodied eyes and the work of the brain. Nevertheless, my aim is to present the eyes not as mere passive receptors of visual stimuli, but as active sites of embodied work through which the curriculum, as "an active unfolding of the course of life" (Carson, 2014, p. 139) is experienced.

The work of the eyes has been seen as problematic by many feminists who examine the power structures at work in the act of looking. Emerging from Mulvey's (1975) article on how the act of looking operates in narrative cinema, her critique exposes both the gaze and the object of the gaze as gendered and embodied. Those who gaze are carriers of power and they extend control through the act of the gaze upon those who are positioned as objects on of the gaze. In cinema, argues Mulvey (1975), woman is the *spectacle*, and man is *the bearer of the look*, a framework that feminists have extended

beyond the context of cinema and into other areas of investigation. The critique of the act of looking exposes how the eyes are not passive receiving organs of sight, but instead demonstrates how the work of the eyes exerts a force upon the object, rendering the object of the gaze as passive, dehumanized, and reducing the body to an object of desire, a body captive and possessed by the eyes.

In contrast to the gaze, the work of the eyes can also be enacted in other ways. According to Safi (2015), both Hindu and Buddhist traditions include a concept of *Darsan*, the "auspicious sight" of a holy person, which bestows merit on the person who is seen. In this work of the eyes, rather than a reductive gazing, the auspicious sight emphasizes a seeing that is a beholding, where an individual is seen or held in honor. This work of the eyes is not capturing an object of desire, but apprehending someone's remarkable or impressive nature, or a bearing witness of another. Safi (2015) explains further that *Darsan* is also the work of the eyes that occurs when looking at a sacred image or icon. "We do not so much *see* the icon as *see through* the icon into the sacredness beyond" (Safi, 2015, p. 1). This work of the eyes is transformative and enables one to look through and recognize the sacredness of that which is within and apprehend the divine looking back. These works of the eyes are "loving glances" (Safi, 2015, p. 1). Extending his exploration of these loving glances, Safi (2015) explains that "the mystics of Islam teach us that, when we look at someone, we do not so much "see" them as project a glance. Where glances meet, souls touch" (p. 1). In this work of the eyes there is creative interconnection which emerges from the ability to resist placing the self as the controller of the look, or gaze, but instead, to engage in corresponding glances.

Opening one's eyes to behold the other and to invite the other to return the glance and experience connection, a touching of souls.

To see this communal work of the eyes as engaging in curriculum as community building, we need "insightful eyes" (Wang, 2004, p. 85). Therefore, when taking up the curriculum as the potential engagement of both "self knowledge and collective witnessing" (Pinar, 2004, p. 37) it matters very much if teachers and students hold one another as objects of the gaze or as recipients of loving glances. Whereas the gaze limits relationality, teachers and learners, each on their own journey of becoming (Greene, 1993), who engage in giving and receiving loving glances through the work of their eyes, open themselves one to the other. In this way, like the womb, the eyes when used to give and receive glances, may serve as embodied sites of transformation, compassion, and gift giving. In opening the eyes to the other, the work of the eyes is engaging in curriculum as community building. Through loving glances, the lived experience of teachers and learners becomes intersectional, relational and communal.

The Work of the Ears

Just as the eyes may have initially appeared to be passive receptors, the ears appear all the more passive in the act of listening, as they absorb sound and receive words and tone. Nevertheless, there are many distinct perspectives which position the work of the ears as essential to both the individual journeying into being and the act of welcoming the stranger inside ourselves - or being welcomed inside by another. As with the work of the eyes, I suggest that the ears too are distinct embodied sites that may be opened, allowing for transformation through compassion and openness to the other.

One distinct quality of the work of the ears is the requirement to be silent in order to be able to listen with intention. Maparyan (2011) describes this self-silencing by drawing on the lived experiences of the South African revolutionary, Pregs Govender, who describes a "going into the silence" (p. 232) that emerges from his Buddhist practices. Govender explains, "the silent time...enabled me to listen with deep recognition and respect for the gifts others had to share" (p. 240). Just as Buddhist tradition provides an alternative perspective to the work of the eyes as powerful agents of recognition and connection with the other, the work of the ears is also illuminated through Buddhist tradition. According to Maparyan (2011), Buddhist tradition holds that both "looking deeply" and "listening deeply" are two methods designed to allow one person to get "inside the skin" of another, in order to evoke empathy, compassions, forgiveness, understanding and the realization of "interbeing" (p. 152). This religious tradition underscores that transformative, creative, intersectional and relational encounters with the other are possible through the work of the ears in the act of deep listening - listening that requires the self to be repositioned.

From a different orientation, Wong & Grant (2014) explain that "through deliberate, conscious, and open listening" we are able to open spaces which invite and acknowledge "alternative portraits of reality, portraits from subaltern perspectives (p. 37). And similarly, Volf (1996) contends that "we enlarge our thinking by letting the voices and perspectives of others, especially those with whom we may be in conflict, resonate within ourselves, by allowing them to help us see them, as well as ourselves, from *their* perspective" (p. 213). Though not aligned in their orientations, both of these positions explore the ways in which the act of listening is simultaneously the act of repositioning

the self in relationship to the other. In opening the ear to the voices of others, a space of apprehending is created, and in so doing there a resonance. *Resonance* is an evocative word, because it describes a small sound that is amplified or intensified through vibrations, and *resonance* is also a transformation of sound. I suggest these connotations of *resonance* speak to the transformative potential of listening, both the transformation of the self as the sounding words and stories of others reverberate within us, as well as the sounding of the other's once silenced stories intensifying in a newly opened space, transforming the silenced other to one with voice. Perhaps this illuminates something of Wang's (2004) encouragement, that "our loving ears" are needed to listen to the "inaudible voices" (p. 85).

From another vantage point, Kristeva also explores listening within the context of the psychoanalytic analyst, wherein the act of listening transmutes the words of others into fleshy realities. Kristeva (2002) writes, "by denying itself and listening to the other...the word can become flesh" (p. 145-146), and in this I understand her to mean that in listening to the other, narrative is transmuted from symbol to embodiment. There is also a recognition of the stranger who resides within as well as the strange other we may invite inside. Kristeva (2002) explains, "I suppose a part of me in you and await from this part the reply to the question that the other part formulates" (p. 146). I take this to mean, that through clinical listening, (or if I freely extrapolate, in other forms of dedicated listening to the other that commit us to practices of compassionate listening, a listening that serves the self and the other), those forms of listening cultivate the recognition of intersectionality with the other through the act of listening.

Derrida (1985) echoes one small component of this recognition of the other through listening in his playful deconstruction of the ear, the organ that is doubled and perpetually open. The acknowledgement of having two ears and that they cannot be closed suggests that they are always actively open, and that their service is doubled to better apprehend the other. I highlight here just the smallest component of Derrida's complex exploration of the ear to draw attention to his idea that the ear is essential to the way we come into being when the other hears our story. Quinn (2014) explains Derrida's (1985) conception of the listening ear of the other in this way,

> In explorations of autobiography via what he calls "oto-biography" (of the "ear") and "autre-biography" (pertaining to that which is "other") our sense of self comes in and through relationship to the other - it is the ear of the other in fact who signs our name. (p. 131)

Derrida's imagining of our two ears, always open, evokes in me the notion of one ear always open to how the self may be transformed in the compassionate act of quieting and listening, and the other ear open to hear the stories of the other - a listening which is relational and may transform the hearer, as well as the one who is heard.

To quiet our own stories, to remove ourselves from the center of our own attention may be an act of compassion not unlike pregnancy, where the mother attunes herself to the growing child within, responding to the needs of the body that serve the child's growth and development. Perhaps when we quiet our own stories our ears may be open for the stories of another - stories that are conceived in our ears. The sacrifice of listening positions the other in primacy to the self for the duration of the listening, but like pregnancy, this work of the body may bear fruit through its creative and

transformational potential. I see in the work of the ears a generous relinquishing of control over the other that mirrors the relinquishment of the power of the gaze to engage in the humility of the glance.

To understand this communal work of the ears as participating in curriculum as community building, we may imagine the intentionality of teachers and students together opening and honoring spaces of silence and resonance and attuning their ears to the other. We may encounter the compassionate work of the ears when the deep humility of opening the ears is modeled and practiced for the purposes of listening for the silenced stories others have to share. The intersectional, relational and communal may emerge when the lived experiences of teachers and learners draws upon listening not as a tool for content acquisition (though it daily serves this function), but as a means of transformation both of the self and the perceptions of the other.

The Work of the Mouth

I have framed both the eyes and the ears as active and engaging in embodied work. My aim in considering the works of the mouth is not to examine the act of speaking, but instead to consider what the mouth, as the embodied site of speaking, may produce. Many theoretical perspectives declare the necessary of examining the liberating potential of storytelling, oral histories, autobiographies, namings, poems, songs, mythologies, and wisdom stories that function as kinds of vessels carrying narratives of the self and other. Critical race theorists, womanists, feminists and post-colonial theorists all advocate for unearthing buried stories and awakening the voices of those who have been historically silenced and socially marginalized. These advocates declare the imperative that "counter-stories" be spoken - the stories "of those experiences that are not

often told" Wong & Grant (2014, p. 37). The urgency of telling these stories is described by Robinson (2004) who explains,

> We need to know the stories of peoples who don't look like us, think like us, work like us, worship like us, or do much of anything like us. We need to learn, learn hard, that there is no better, no worse, only different, wonderfully, stimulatingly, equally different, to be treasured, protected, profited from. We need to see the humanity of that strange and distant world as indistinguishable from our own" (p. 133, as cited in Wong & Grant, 2014, p. 38).

What draws my attention, however, is not these narrative structures or the containers of lived experience (the stories, the songs, the poems, the oral traditions), as invaluable as they are, but instead I am drawn to the tension between understanding the mouth as the site of solitary, distinct voices or a site of multiple intersecting voices.

Biesta (2004) contends that "the other community," or the community that resists homogenizing or exclusionary practices by embracing alterity, "comes into existence when one speaks in one's own voice that is unique, singular, and unprecedented, the voice that has never been heard before" (p. 319). I hear in his statement, a supportive claim for the importance of each individual's voice to be spoken, and an affirmation for all counter-stories to be told. I also hear a complicated position, one that may suggest that community is built when all of the distinct singular voices are brought together - something akin to saying the choir comes into existence when all of the distinct soloists come together. Such a position simultaneously summons all voices to sing, but adheres to the notion of a singular, coherent, stable, unified subject who produces a singular, coherent, stable, unified voice; that the communal emerges from singularity.

I wish to wrestle with this idea and to explore the embodiment of the mouth as a site of creative, generative potential, as well as a self-sacrificial site that produces transformative lived experiences for the individual as well as the stranger. Miller (2005) reflects upon her body of research and comes to realize that her early writing, which sought to give voice to the hidden narratives of women, reflected an essentialized understanding of women's voices. Over time, she explains, "I have been persuaded by poststructural feminist claims that subjects and "voices" are irreducibly multiple" (p. 6). Her new perspective shifts her understanding away from a universal essence in women's narratives to a recognition of multiplicity, not simply of voices, as in many voices, but a multiplicity of selves speaking in a multiplicity of voices. Miller (2005) explains that the multiplicity of voices speaks of "fragmentations" within each individual that is "suggestive of openings, crossings, and spaces in and through which to disrupt notions of authoritative and "finalized" discourses or identity constructions" (p. 6). I find this language rich with connotations. I suggest that the work of the mouth can create spaces of opening, crossings and disruption, and in so doing, reveal the transformative potential of the self while welcoming the multiplicity of voices that emerge from a self that is continuously changing and under construction.

The fragmented, fragile and formative self acknowledges a humility of voice and a deference for the multiple and perhaps incongruent voices that emerge. I see in this humility and deference something akin to the suffering that emerges in motherhood, as I discussed earlier in this chapter, as well as in the economy of gifts. This diffidence and endurance bears a likeness to "the suffering together with" that is compassion. Maxine Greene (1993) was drawn to the word "*heteroglossia*" and the notion of "the existence of

many voices, some contesting, some cohering, all demanding and deserving attention" (p. 212). On the surface her description could suggest discordant voices emerging in their alterity, however, I would suggest that we could also imagine the voice of mother and voice of the potential child growing inside the womb speaking simultaneously, we might glimpse one small example of the *heteroglossia* and the intersectionality of multiple subjectivities giving voice. I see Green's description to land someplace between Biesta's (1994) individual voices as fundamental to any hope for the formation of the other community and Miller's (2005) embrace of the multiplicity of voices emanating from subjects in flux. Even as Greene's *heteroglossia* bridges these two orientations, I understand her to insist that the work of the mouth is many, as is the attentiveness to the multiplicity and the alterity of the voices.

The work of the mouth is not to hone a powerful voice, to speak a single powerful story, but instead, the work of the mouth is to open a point of courageous conversation, where we resist whatever we might perceive as our own dominant narratives, and in humility and gentleness acknowledge our fragmented selves and allow our other voices to speak. The work of the mouth is not a single voice, but the speaking of our multiple voices and manifesting the intersectionality of our multiple selves. The open mouth that speaks in this way engages in the economy of gifts, and these voices carry momentum, shifting the gift "from body to body" as Sarbanes (2009) describes, expanding the gift into a wider interconnected circle, the giving voice to our communal body. The work of the mouth, in the outward facing gift of multiple intersecting voices, can function much like what Sarbanes (2009) observed in the Shaker community. Their "gifts" which emanated in worship and as "forms of expression" appeared as

> the "gift of song," "the dancing gift," "the whirling gift," and so on. Gifts of inspiration, rather than material objects...served to create a joyous sense of union within the group as well as to open the community to exchanges with spectators and potential converts from among the "World's People" (as the Shakers called their non-Shaker counterparts). (p.125)

I contend, that like the Shaker's gifts and works of the body, interconnective experiences of joy and exchange may also emerge from the works of the mouth in acknowledging, honoring and speaking in multiple voices. Giving voice to fragmentation, multiplicity, generative possibility, the *not yet* of becoming (Greene, 1993) is invitational and life affirming. The work of the mouth is gift giving and a relational enactment, because in the economy of gifts, a gift once given, is catalytic, both enabling and accelerating the circle of gift giving actions to emerge.

The work of the mouth: A lived story

My father told me the story of Mrs. Lewellen three or four times that I can remember, once was in the final months of his life. She had been one of his teachers when he was a freshman in high school, I believe. He never described her appearance, nor her demeanor, but he only repeated her words. Tears would rise in his eyes each time he related the story of Mrs. Lewellen.

My father was the fifth of six children, with his only sister born barely nine months before him. He was born in a shack in the farm country of Illinois, and he was not expected to survive, but he did. His life was submerged in the cruelties of poverty, neglect, alcoholism, abuse, and the myriad subjective traumas of a family struggling in rural America between the Great Depression and World War II. One year he attended 13

different schools as the family moved from venture to venture struggling to make a life. None of his siblings graduated from high school. Sometimes he lived out of the backseat of his brother's car, walking to school and skipping classes to play pool to make a little money, school was not a priority. Shooting squirrels or gigging frogs to bring home to his mother to fix for dinner was often the greater priority.

Dad could not recall the circumstances leading up to the words Mrs. Lewellen spoke that day. He only remembered that something transpired and Mrs. Lewellen turned to him, held his eyes for a moment and said, "to whom much is given, much is required." My Dad's voice would break each time he recounted these words to me. Nothing in his life confirmed her words. He could not see that anything had been given him, let alone that *much* had been given. His world was characterized by lack, absence, shame, and the desperation of depravation. Somehow, however, Mrs. Lewellen's words pulled back the veil, and like a magic incantation Dad was illumined, transformed, made visible to himself, and made necessary to the world around him. Mrs. Lewellen said that he was filled with possibility rather than lack, a young man not defined by the social and cultural marginalization of class, but a young man anointed for both possibility and for responsibility.

The work of Mrs. Lewellen's eyes and mouth opened a transformative space for my father. Her words cannot be reduced to the platitude that "you can be anything you want to be" – far from it. Her words became the embodied vehicle of transformative power. Her words changed the nature of my father's engagement with the world, as someone who has something of value *to give*, something the world needed. She opened the interconnected imperative of our communal body, in which he was able to glimpse

the multi-directional mysterious circle of responsibility and relationality. Mrs. Lewellen's embodied invitation described a community that my father had never imagined, but one which captivated his imagination.

His story is not the victory lap of finishing high school, which he did, or finishing college and law school, for that matter. The story is my father's embrace of the spaces of being and becoming and the exploration of the multiplicity of voices through which he could participate in the communal body: as a serviceman, an inventor, a businessman, a minister, a lawyer, a judge, a husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather. The gift of Mrs. Lewellen's words were a relational and transformational enactment which initiated the circle of communal giving and receiving in which my father intentionally participated throughout his lifetime. And it was through my father's gifts and works of the body that I first came to glimpse community and my own interconnectedness to the communal body.

Living, Not Prescribing

How easy it would be to misconstrue these works of the body as slipping into the curriculum-as-constructed and suggest we take actions for outcomes. A misunderstanding of my argument would be to suggest that I am advocating simply to look, to listen, to speak in slightly different ways and this will build community. Far from it. The work of the body is always about transformation, creation, invitation, and generative potential. For if I have my own lived experience of being seen and seeing; if I have lived experience of listening deeply and being recognized by others in their listening of me; if I speak in wondrously unfathomable multiple voices and open myself to the fragmented voices of others - in these works of the body I am opened, like a womb, and something of

the *beloved community* may come to grow inside me, and inside those who make these spaces within themselves for me, also a stranger, to enter. The work of the body perpetually engaging in such lived experiences is transformative, and only in transformative, embodied encounters, and lived intersectionalities with the self and the other can a community characterized by difference hope to be built.

Embodied Curriculum as Community Building

Aoki (1999) describes the curriculum as "a generative space of difference, an enunciatory space of becoming, a space where newness emerges" (p. 35), and he draws upon the metaphor of the bridge to describe this curricular space. According to Jones (2014), Aoki's bridge "is an in-between or interspace through which we might dwell, together, not only as teachers and students but also as human beings in (with!) our world" (p. 18). My aim throughout this chapter has been to explore curriculum as community building through various traditions of women's ways of knowing and being in the world and by interrupting the mind-body duality that marginalize the works of the body. Examining the metaphor of pregnancy and child nurturing has been to challenge the external systematic notions of community building, and to glimpse instead, the ways in which community building may emerge through internalized, lived, and embodied experiences.

Kristeva (1986) explains that "the pregnant woman is situated on "the threshold between nature and culture, biology and language" (p. 297). Because she is situated at this complex point of intersection, she exemplifies the conditions and tensions that make it possible for the maternal to be creative, to be the relational. The maternal allows for the

fluid, intersectional and complicated potential of simultaneously holding division, multiplicity, tension, uncertainty, horror, and benevolence.

Gurton-Wachter (2016), describes in provocative language the transformative openness of pregnancy through which we may approach strangeness through the lens of women's body. She writes,

> your body becomes inhabited by a stranger, by a guest who is *stranger* than any other guest you've ever hosted, insofar as you have never even met; and yet also closer and more intimate than any other, insofar as they are, really, a part of yourself. In pregnancy, you become strange to yourself, estranged from who you once were, from what your body used to be or mean or contain, so that your body turns into something that you no longer fully understand. In pregnancy, the distinction you once knew between self and other comes undone. So does the gap between how you protect yourself and how you care for others. (p. 1)

The embodied knowledge learned through pregnancy illuminates the possibility of engaging with the other that resists transactional formulas and insists upon relationality.

To see the curriculum as community building, we must come to recognize the interdependence and relational circle of embodied and lived experiences of all those that inhabit the school. We must shift our objectifying and auditing gaze and recognize how the curriculum may open spaces of "loving glances' (Safi, 2015, p. 1) wherein all members of the classroom may encounter the sacred other to which they are relationally connected. We must come to reimagine the curriculum not merely as plan, system, or method, but as living experiences, moments of invitation, welcome, and boundary crossing when we pull our desks together and share silences to listen to the words others

have written, the voices and stories others have to tell that allow us to recognize their words being animated into beautiful flesh (Kristeva, 2002). To see the curriculum as community building we must be willing to suspend the singularity of schooling outcomes we have been forced to accept, those that standardize the paths of entrance to the marketplace, and instead examine the priceless, life affirming, sacred labor of interconnected becoming that may emerge as teacher and student wrestle with knowledge and make meaning together; through math and science, history and language to locate themselves in the universe and in the mystery of our shared human-beingness. The curriculum as community building emerges through the gifts and works of the body as teachers and learners make relational enactments out of the work of opening a text, or the solving of problems, or of critically engaging difference and complexity in all of its forms with the ultimate aim of approaching enactments of maternal hospitality – enactments that are able to hold tension and fear for the potential of shared transformation and relational encounter. This does not mean we forsake the rules of grammar or the lessons of the periodic table, but that we conceptualize the curriculum exponentially broader, as a vast terrain of human embodied experiences of teaching and learning that allow us to *also* imagine the chemical elements arranged in their scientific grid as far more than the building blocks of the material world, but as the physical and poetic ties that speak to our interconnectedness and our relationality. Together, teachers and students may embody the curriculum and live into new meaning, new knowledge, and reimagine how *what is of most worth* is that which is sustaining, that which feeds our creativity, and that which elevates our ability to recognize our always-already interconnectedness.

Nagler (2004) speaks to "the mysterious unity among all of us, which is the hidden glory in each of us" (p. 265), and through his metaphysical even sacred language, I suggest that he raises a challenge which can be applied to going beyond the narrow instrumental purposes of teaching and learning that we have inherited. Rather than competitive models of schooling attentive to the achievements of the individual and which highlight singularity, autonomy, and separateness, we might instead pursue our common good and our shared futures. The interconnectedness Nagler describes highlights the glorious bonds that tie us together, stranger to stranger, almost in the mystery of the umbilical cord linking mother and unborn child. In this way the metaphor of motherhood enables us to reimagine teaching and learning not as a race, a competition, or game of achievers and failures, but as human, embodied, relational, interdependent, and mutually sustaining.

I am again reminded of John Winthrop's (1633) speech which I reflected upon in earlier chapters, and drawn in new ways to his metaphor of being "members of the same body." In pregnancy and through the works of the body that I have explored as substitutionary sites of the metaphoric womb, one outcome has been the extension of Winthrop's metaphor. To be members of the same body could mean that I am a foot and you are a hand and together with others we make a body - a notion not too removed from many soloists brought together to form a choir. Such a notion of a body or a community is insufficient and obstructs transformational intersectionality. I have argued instead for considering the works of the body as they may be seen through the metaphor of the womb, and through the eyes, ears, and mouth, which may similarly open generative and sustainable potentials. The relational, creative and transformational power of these

maternal openings are described by Kristeva (2002) as a "space of interlocking alterities" achieved through a "plural decentering" (p. 67, as cited in Wang, 2004, p. 92). This is the work of the body that the mother/hostess knows. The hostess/mother and her child engage in a mutually transformative relationship, each opening to the other; child and mother each called into becoming through the work of the body, a commingling of strangeness and difference, and the obligations of the nurturance.

Curriculum as community building emerges in this embodied and lived matrix of human experiences. Curriculum as community building is not systematized. It is internalized. It is the recognition of how we may come to see in ourselves the openings that may serve as multidirectional spaces of interconnectivity, intersectionality and "interlocking alterity," to once again repeat Kristeva's (2000, p. 67) powerful language. Todd (2003) explains "it is in the relating to an unknowable other through the adventure of learning (and teaching) that teachers and students become psychically implicated in the very possibilities for ethical interaction" (p. 4). It is in the curriculum-as-lived (Aoki, 1986), and the curriculum-as-embodied, and the curriculum-as-experienced-together that our relationships one to another are unmasked. And it is through the works of the body, inclusive and expansive, that all members of the human race may actively participate in the curriculum as community building. We may substitute the works of our eyes, ear and mouth for the metaphoric mother's womb, and in so doing both experience and express our revisioning of hospitality, such that teachers and learners, both inside and outside the classroom may come to know something of participating in the creation of a community which comes into existence only where alterity is an indispensable imperative.

CHAPTER V

EMERGENCE

"We take our measure of being from what surrounds us, and what surrounds us is always to some extent, of our own making." (Harrison, 2002, p. 349, as cited in Casemore, 2008, p. 1).

"Time, place, culture, and internal experiencing form an intricate web of connections and circular movements in space." (Wang, 2009, p. 167).

"We cannot make or force our students to expose themselves to what is other and different and strange...the only thing we can do is to make sure that there are at least opportunities within education to meet and encounter what is different, strange and other." (Biesta, 2004, p. 321).

Extending the Lived and Embodied Curriculum

In the previous chapter I explored the lived, experiential and embodied curriculum, in which theory is enacted, practiced and known in and through our physical bodies. This perspective acknowledges that we live in a material world and engage with/in our world as embodied human beings, who come into being and interact with other beings who are themselves physical bodies in the world. In my examination of this embodiment, I proposed that my vision of curriculum as community building is internalized and lived out in our bodies and that curriculum as community building

emerges through the various gifts and works of the body, bodies that are always-already situated in interconnectedness and intersectionality. Just as theory becomes praxis when it is situated and worked out in and through physical bodies, so too are bodies situated and working in both time and space. The focus of this chapter then, is to extend the consideration of the curriculum as lived and embodied, and to turn my attention to the specific examination of emergence, time, space, and place, which together form the context, site, nexus and potentiality of cultivating curriculum as community building and the opening in which we may hope to encounter transformational relationality.

The Shed

When I was in college studying to become a literature, writing, and art teacher, I took an exploratory primitive arts course in which we learned simple loom weaving. Though I have not done any weaving for quite some time, I continue to be drawn to the characteristics of weaving that connect it to culture, narrative, story, attentiveness, pattern, and surprise. As an art form or craft, weaving acknowledges time, space, and emergence. In its most basic form, weaving is a simple interlacing of threads. First, the stabilizing warp threads are established by wrapping or tying them to the loom, then later, the weaver interlaces the weft threads over and under the warp threads to create a textile through the grid-work or lattice of threads. Even in the simplest forms, weaving demands an attention to time - in the sequential work of tying warp threads *before*, and the work of weaving weft threads *after*. The weaver knows that before any weaving can begin, she must tie and wrap the foundational warp threads that run from the top to the bottom of the loom.

Just as the weaver is attentive to time, the weaver must also acknowledge the demands of space, for in order to weave what will become the surface of the textile, an opening must be formed in the foundational warp threads through which the weft threads can pass, whether pulled by a shuttle or simply threaded by hand, over and under the warp-thread foundation. All forms of weaving depend upon finding and opening the spaces between the foundational warp threads in anticipation of the threads that will be laid in and interlaced by the weaver's work. In more advanced weaving, intentional and artful spaces must be opened in various sequential patterns, one following the other, to allow the weft threads to be woven into an infinite number of designs, shapes and patterns. Most advanced looms have a mechanism for separating the warp threads into upper and lower sets of threads to create a space for the shuttle to travel back and forth depositing the weft threads. No matter the method for lifting and separating the warp threads, this temporary space must be made for weaving to take place. The temporary space is called the *shed*.

When I reflect on the work of forming the *shed*, I am drawn to the anticipation for what is to come, as well as how anticipation is situated in time and space, and how forming the shed speaks to the desire embedded both in the lived experience of weaving as well as in the hoped-for emergence of the textile. Similar to my weaving example perhaps, I suggest that the lived, embodied, internalized experience of curriculum as community building depends upon the purposeful and poetic attention to time and space and the anticipation of emergence.

The Circle of Emergence

I have designed this chapter in the pattern of a circle, as it seems to best represent the way I understand emergence, and it is also in keeping with feminist notions of women's experiences as circular. My intentional circular organizational arrangement acknowledges Hendry's (2011) reminder that "women's experience is grounded in repetition and cycles" (p. 4), an idea she draws from Kristeva's (1986) exploration of various modalities of time - one of which is cyclical time. According to Kristeva (1986), cyclical time departs from a linear view of historical time and instead considers relational and recursive space as central to female subjectivity. This chapter then, draws upon this relational and recursive view of cyclical time, which benefits the reimagining of curriculum as community building. Inasmuch as my exploration of emergence attends to the hope for the *not yet*, I begin first by exploring ways of conceptualizing emergence. I then continue around the circle to consider time, space, and place, then return to overlap, but not close, the beginning of the circle by considering emergence once more.

Acknowledging Tensions and Chaos

For all of his deeply reflective work of building bridges of emergent space where teachers and students can dwell together, Ted Aoki's own lived experience made him skeptical of community. Once in a conversation, when asked his thoughts about community Aoki responded, "I would like us to appreciate how difficult it is to form community" (quoted in Carson, 2014, p. 134). Carson, a colleague of Aoki, understood that the reticence Aoki held towards community came from his lived experiences wherein he had known firsthand the perils of marginalization and estrangement and had found his own encounters with community to be problematic and disappointing. From someone

steadfastly committed to the intersectional space of becoming that can be found between teachers, students, and the curriculum, it is possible to see all the more clearly the great challenges inherent in positioning curriculum as community building.

You will recall in chapter two that as I examined some of the stories of community, most efforts of community building are framed around practices of exclusion or homogenization, because difference is destabilizing and cannot be permitted to reside in the midst of community. In fact, community is very often created as the bulwark to protects us from the flood waters of difference and strangeness rushing in. As my previous examination has shown, whatever human experiences of community come into being, they most often exist in contrast to, and parallel with, lived experiences of estrangement, exile, and trauma. We must only remember the powerful *soil* and *blood* metaphors threaded throughout chapter two, which are often the gatekeepers to definitions of community, to once again be reminded of the strain, pressure, tensions, and chaos that emerges in response to imaginations of communities that are inclusive of vast, profound, and unassimilated human difference. Acknowledging with clear eyes that exclusion, intolerance, prejudice, hatred, fear, xenophobia, and self-preservation are pervasive expressions of human experience in our contemporary historical moment, our work is to discover how to ethically respond to the threatening chaos of human difference such that alterity is honored and new imaginations of community may be realized.

So as I begin my consideration of emergence and the intersectionality of time, space and place which are the contextualized openings for lived and embodied experiences of curriculum as community building, the acknowledgement of chaos is of the utmost importance. Acknowledging chaos is important, not only for its descriptive

power to articulate the perceived threats of profound human difference and divergent lived experiences, but to frame the tumultuous context in which we may anticipate the possibility, expectation, hope, and desire for community. Chaos is essential, because according to Kauffman (1995), "emergence...appears[s] at the edge of chaos" and order (p. 28, as cited in Stanley, 2005, p. 144). Thus, contexts characterized by disorder, confusion, turmoil, and upheaval are the very sites in which we may look for emergence. Stanley (2005) goes on to explain that "emergence, therefore, is driven by... the nature of a system far-from-equilibrium" (p. 146). Emergence does not issue from stability, predictability, harmony or balance, but instead, emergence arises from tensions and discontinuities - they are in fact the necessary drivers of emergence. In this way, emergence suggests the arrival of something *not yet*, something that surprises "right there, in the midst of things" (Wallace, 1987, p. 111, as cited in Jardine, 2012, p. 11), in the midst of instability, discomfort, and unresolved lived experiences of difference.

Toward Describing the Ontology of Emergence

I endeavor to look critically and to consider the interconnections of emergence, time, space, and place for the purposes of examining how our lived experiences come into being in the material world. This is not as an exercise in crafting language to define these abstract concepts, but rather the consideration of how our embodied relational experiences of responsibility, compassion, welcome, transformation, and nurturance may be lived. These considerations speak to the *where* and *how* of possible community building, while not offering a prescriptive process, mechanism, or strategy. Instead I suggest that the emergence of the other community, the community of difference, requires an attunement to time, space, and place as transformative openings and sites of

being that we may hold and open with intentionality. In what follows, I consider how our living embodied experiences with the curriculum as planned and the curriculum as lived (Aoki, 1986) may become moments of emergence situated in time, space and contextualized place, where the other community may be formed.

To begin describing emergence, I turn to Huebner (1987) who suggests that "man's existence...is an emergence" (p.326) and that our awareness of temporality "arises out of man's existence" (p.326). This conceptualization of emergence links man's awareness of his being to the passage of time and spaces in which time passes. Emergence is the recognition of something new rising up within a contextualized present as it is framed by the historically complex past. In this way, the site and experience of emergence may be autobiographical, intersectional, and relational. Miller's (2010) autobiographical theory suggests we find our stories of lived experiences "located in particular times and places" (p. 64), an idea that dovetails with Wang's (2009) explanation that emergence is the "intersectionality of the temporal, spacial, and inter/subjective" (p. 1).

Emergence is the anticipation of a horizon event, or the awareness of arriving at the horizon, the moment of occurrence, and the experience where the anticipation for *not yet* intersects the arrival and the coming into being. Wang (2009) highlights the generative and creative potential of this intersection of time, space, and relationality, explaining that "creative potentiality lies in the interconnectedness between and among the past, the present, and the future, while at the same time, something new emerges from concrete, specific contexts and demands of current daily life which cannot be confined by the past" (p. 2). Emergence, then, speaks to human times, and storied spaces, and

contextualized moments of interconnectedness, as well as interrelational spaces of intersecting subjectivities and experiences.

Such descriptions speak of convergence and suggest to my mind a metaphor of emergence as a kind of threshold, a doorway of sorts, one we perpetually approach and cross and cross again, each time "enlarging the space of the possible" (Sumara & Davis, 1997, as cited in Osberg, 2009, p. iii). It is the opening and also the potential reopening. It is the circle that repeats, overlaps, perpetually turning the corner over onto itself, resisting closure and the finality of the past tense, (while dependent upon the historical past). It is the circle that is always open unto itself, in pursuit of the *not yet* and then the moment of arrival and birth.

These are poetic and necessarily untidy descriptions of emergence, because as David & Phelps (2004) suggest, "instances of complex emergence call for webbed, multithreaded tales and nested, scale independent geometries to accommodate forms that can become more intricate, more dense, more pregnant with possibilities. (p. 4, as cited in Osberg, 2009, p. v). These *multithreaded* descriptions suggest that emergence is complex and resists narrow parameters, requiring instead storied spaces of possibility. Drawing from all of these ideas, I understand emergence to be the awareness of the present arrival, the moment of lived experience which are found in times and spaces, the nowness that erupts out of our anticipation for something new, something beyond our past. Emergence therefore is an ontological space of being and becoming that is dependent upon time, space and place.

The examination of emergence elevates our awareness of our human being and becoming as contextualized, situated and lived out in time and space. If we hold that the

lived experience of the curriculum may open a potentially generative space of relational potential and emancipatory power, the curriculum as community building depends upon an understanding of how our lived experiences, as well as the gifts and works of the body may serve as transformational moments of emergence. My effort is to reimagine curriculum as community building as experiential and transformative, rather than programmatic and systematized, and therefore depends upon an attentiveness to the vast potential within moments of emergence as well as an attunement to transformative openings. Perhaps it may be that in our attentiveness to the arriving and circle of recursive emergence, we may even come to position ourselves in such a way that we may cultivate times and spaces of emergence.

Holding Time Open

Emergence is dependent upon the interweaving of time, space, place and our becoming. Huebner (1987) explains, man's existence is not defined by occupation of time and space, "but by his participation in an emerging universe" (p. 326). This participation in the universe, the living and experiencing of the world occurs in a series of unfolding moments of the present. Huebner (1987) further explains that "human life is never fixed but is always emergent as the past and future become horizons of a present" (p. 328). These horizons of the present speak to the potential moment by moment awareness of our living experiences, but also speak to an awareness of past experiences and an openness to future experiences. Thus, the participation in the universe is always bounded by temporality and our ability to hold time open, or appreciate time as conditional for emergence, within ourselves as well as engage in the making of time in and through our living experiences. In this way, time can be understood as full - holding both the past and

the present experience in and with the world; and time can be understood as empty - held open for the *not yet* horizon of the emerging, as well as the moment of arrival. My aim therefore is to suggest in the curriculum as community building that we can come to hold time open for the moments of arrival through intention, thoughtfulness, and attunement to the open horizon of possibility where something new may emerge, the possibility of encountering a different kind of community.

Two Greek words, *alethia* and *poiesis*, are useful for framing this idea of holding time. Heidegger (1927/1962) defines "*Aletheia*, [as] disclosure regarded as the opening of presence" (p. 69). I understand his use of the word to provide a meaningful way of recognizing human experience as it arrives in moments of time. *Alethia*, when understood as the disclosure of what has been concealed, suggests that there are revelatory moments in time where living experiences become evident, or open to our eyes. *Alethia* is the moment of seeing, or recognition - even if the seeing, or what is seen, is always partial, incomplete, and evolving. The companion word I wish to consider, *poiesis*, can be defined as bringing forth, or the possibility of making, creating, or bringing into being something that did not exist before. *Poesis* suggests that if we hope for something new to emerge, or if we hope to be the builders of something new, we must recognize that these are embodied and temporal activities, and as such, we must preserve time for the potentiality of emergence, the new that we hope to build. In this way, I suggest that time can be held in such a way we can experience revelatory moments of disclosure (*alethia*) where something that has not existed before can come into being (*poesis*).

The Worthwhile

I have suggested the possibility for embodied engagement in temporality, and further, the encouragement to explore how to intentionally protect and preserve time, or set apart time, or hold time open for exploration, revelation, and even the beneficial occurrence of serendipity (Wang, 2014). One perspective of this idea is deeply examined through the hermeneutic theorizing of David Jardine (2012) into what is worthwhile, or the worth of whiling. Jardine (2012) attends to the investiture of time, the gathering of time, the cultivation of time, and the preservation of time for the sake of human experiences that carry worth. He considers pedagogical spaces and reflects upon "what makes some experiences worthy of rest and repose, worthy of returning, worthy of tarrying and remembering, of taking time, of whiling away our lives in their presence" (p. 173-174).

Jardine (2012) contends that in framing time for the pursuit of the worthwhile, that we honor the "hidden ontology" that "*to be* worthy of while means not being disconnected and fragmented and distanced" (p. 175) but to recognize that we live in and participate with/in the world. When we open time for the pursuit of whiling, we search for "kinships," "verisimilitudes" (p. 176) and look "to be implicated in what [we] while over" (p. 176), and "to recognize [ourselves] in the mess of the world" (Hillmans, 1983, p. 49, as cited in Jardine, 2012, p. 176). Thus, holding time open is filled with intention, but devoid of predetermined outcomes, expectations, and destinations. Holding time open through intentional preservation and protection of living moments is therefore anticipatory, expectant, and awaiting for the interconnections and interrelationships that may emerge, both our interconnectedness to the world and to others.

By drawing in these threads from Jardine's (2012) hermeneutic perspective, I suggest that we legitimize our embodied experiences as generative and transformational when we engage in the purposeful holding and valuing of time, when we practice "tarrying" (p. 187) or holding open the "long and gathering while" (p.174). Just as the hostess/mother's embodiment is transformed with and by maternal time, so too are the works of the body, the opening of the eyes, ears, and mouth, dependent upon the holding open of time. As I suggested in chapter four, it is through the gifts and works of the body, expansive, inclusive, and equitable, that all human beings may actively participate in the curriculum as community building. When we explore ways of opening and protecting time, we invoke our imagination to see temporal constructions where these works of the body may come into existence. We preserve and open time to see, hear, and speak, to invite the stranger into ourselves, or to find ourselves invited into the metaphoric womb of the eye, ear, or mouth of another. This embodied work interrupts as it engages with/in the world, anticipating the possibility of intersection and transformation. For the curriculum of community building, we must come to participate in invitational time and anticipate that our embodied experiences may bring us to the intersection of *alethia* and *poiesis* - that we may both encounter the poetic disclosure of the opening of presence, as well as participate in the creation of something new.

Practicing the Holding Open of Time

Two rituals of faith, one from Judaism and one from Christianity, seem beneficial exemplars of ways in which we can visualize the poetry and the praxis of holding time for the possibility of emergence and its transformational potential. The Jewish practice of observing Shabbat, or the Sabbath, and the Christian practice of keeping Advent both

stand as evocative metaphors and perhaps even living examples of the praxis of timekeeping and time-making in anticipation of the *not yet* of emergence and transformation.

Observing the Sabbath

For thousands of years, Shabbat has been observed at the closing of each week as a sacred time of rest, distinct and separate from the rest of the week. The observance of Shabbat includes traditional blessings, shared meals, refraining from work, spiritual contemplation, and other unique practices that reflect familial and cultural characteristics. For my consideration of time-making, I select just a few elements of observing Shabbat that speak to my explorations of holding time, which may be illustrative for how embodiment may intersect with anticipatory time. My attention is turned specifically to how the observation of Shabbat includes elements which gather time and draw upon repetition, memory, and an invitation to relationality.

Each Friday evening as sunset approaches, the candles are lit by the mother and Shabbat begins. While the Sabbath is a cyclical weekly occurrence, the symbolic act of lighting the candles ushers in and frames a sacred time, a time set apart and protected. Traditionally the mother lights two candles (Rich, 1995); the first is thought to signify remembrance and the second to represent keeping watch, guarding and observing. In the symbolism of the first candle, time past is brought into the present moment through memory, tradition, and repetitive ritual. While the second candle holds open and preserves the time of the present, the nowness of the Sabbath. After she lights the candles, the mother waves her hands inward three times over the candles in a physical gesture of invitation and welcome, welcoming the time of observance, as well as

welcoming those who choose to observe. The lighting of the candles and the waving of the hands in circles over the candles are invitational acts, welcoming the time set apart for the individual and shared lived experience and observance of sacred time.

Observing Shabbat is a marking of time for rest that mirrors the remembrance of the end of the creation story in the book of Genesis when God first rested. The ritual practices of Shabbat bring together in the time of the present, the memory of the past, as well as the attunement towards a future hope. The observance of Shabbat practices an awareness of temporality in which the present practice is enriched by the repetition and tradition brought forward from the past, not only the sacred past of creation time, but the weekly past, Sabbath to Sabbath, practiced by generations of the observant. The ritual, repetition, and weekly practice of holding time is rich with expectancy and interconnection. In observing the Sabbath and the intentional retreat from the external world of doing, time is opened for something other than doing - time is opened for the emergence of being. In this way, the repetition of the ritual is attentive not only to the past, but to emergent potential, and anticipates that in the observation of this practice of faith there is the expectant potential of emergence - that something new and transformative will arrive, that the venerated past will intersect the moment of the present, our present being, which is held open in the space of candlelight.

Keeping Advent

Similar to observing Shabbat, the keeping of Advent is also a practice of holding time, but in this case, time is held for intentional waiting, expectation, anticipation. Advent is traditionally followed throughout the four weeks leading up to Christmas. Each week one of four candles is lit, until the fifth candle is lit on Christmas day.

Accompanying the weekly candle lighting rituals are reflective readings, sacred texts, and traditional songs which attend to a distinct theme for each week.

The focus of keeping Advent is one of *adventus,* the Latin word which means *coming*, and in this way the weeks approaching Christmas are set aside as a time of expectant waiting and a preparation for the long-promised messiah whose birth is remembered and celebrated at Christmas. Advent acknowledges the darkness into which the light is brought forth, and cultivates the attitude of "a hungering dark" (Buechner, 1985) which anticipates the future arrival of the light. This attentiveness to the anticipated arrival of the light and the longing for the emergence of the light reminds me of Jardine's (2012) notion of "the long and gathering while" (p. 174), inasmuch as the waiting is not passive, but an active positioning of oneself in the temporality of anticipation of what awaits on the horizon. The waiting and anticipation of Advent speak to the longing for connection and the desire for transformation of the self and of the hoped-for world still to be uncovered.

Both observing Shabbat and the keeping of Advent actively engage with temporality, recognizing that our being emerges in times and spaces, and that ritual practices of time keeping and time making allow one to hold open the present moment for an expectation of something to emerge which is *not yet*. In the held open space of the present, the remembered past is made meaningful for the sake of the inter/connection and transformation that may come into being in the time that we hold open for emergence. Going a step further, beyond the approaching rest of Shabbat and the light of Advent, the unexpected transformation of emergence may surprise us. As Jardine (2012) suggests, in this anticipatory waiting, in whiling, "you can happen upon something unanticipated.

Insurgency is possible. Something can "come up" of its own accord "over and above our wanting and doing" (Gadamer, 1989, p. 185, as cited in Jardine, 2012, p. 185). Thus, the ultimate possibility of holding time is the emergence of transformation.

Opening Space and Honoring Place

As I suggested previously, it is my reimagination that curriculum as community building may emerge through the works of the body as they intersect time, space, and place. In the same way that the works of the body require the careful holding of time, so too must we open spaces and places for embodied engagements of transformation which may lead us to reimaginations and experiences of community and community building. As I will explain later in this chapter, space and place are theorized differently, yet they are two threads so entwined with one another that in attempting to separate them, fibers from one persistently cling to the other. Even as I explore each idea independently in the following sections, I see the fuzzy edges where space and place overlap. Nevertheless, I think there is value is attempting to describe "the space as we create it, as well as the place in which it occurs" (Howard, Patterson, Kinloch, Burkhard & Randall, 2016, p. 760), because space and place are both instrumental in contextualizing emergence and the hope of curriculum as community building.

The Space of Being

I understand space as the openings for being, and distinct from theories of place. Heidegger's (1962/1962) provides us with the concept of "being-in-the-world" which is attentive to our human *beingness*. Huebner (1987) also explains that "the individual is not separated from the world, or apart from it - he is part of it" (p. 327). These two ideas suggest that our beingness is situated in spaces, or that there are spaces of being.

Howard, Patterson, Kinloch, Burkhard & Randall (2016) expand this idea, explaining that our being can find itself situated in both "real and imagined space" (p. 757). And Bondi (2005) conceives of space as essentially "relational" (p.142).

Whatever attributes we choose to describe space, Huebner (1987) believes that these spaces, or environments "must encourage the moment of vision...so that [the individual's] own potentiality for being is grasped" (p. 329). And similarly, Jardine (2012) explains that "spaces are opened up where things can happen to us, and our lives can be shaped with some graciousness, and mindfulness" (p. 11). These perspectives suggest that space is necessary for making our being visible, and also necessary for the *not yet* of our being that awaits on the horizon. Space is also necessary for the possibility of transformation, growth, change, and the imagination of something new emerging. In these various conceptualizations of space, I see something different than the holding open of time, and something also different from localized defined topographies of place (which I will explore in the following section), but instead I understand the notion of space as the framing of opportune sites where we may come to awareness of our being and where our experiences take shape and take on meaning.

The kind of space we seek, however, is fragile and difficult to cultivate. We are cautioned by Jardine (2012), that "we should, however, have no illusion. Free spaces are rare and hard won, and learning to live well within them is hard work that requires stillness, generosity, and perseverance" (p. 8). Far removed from the simplistic turn of phrase, *carving out some space in your life*, the intentional crafting of space is a metamorphic ontological experiment.

Two different approaches to conceptualizing this fragile space are explored by Wang (2004, 2014), each one possessing its specific attributes and limitations. In her early theorizing, Wang (2004) drew upon Homi Bhabha's (1990) conception of a third space which "connects memory and place for improvised movement between different cultures and different spaces" (p. 3). This exploration of space considers the relational engagements with time and locatable place, and the way this kind of in-between space opens opportunities for transformation and relationality. In addition to the generative potential of the third space, Wang (2014) also recognizes its challenges, tensions, and oppositions. In conceiving the third space, one must recognize the potential strain and the difficulties of intersectionality and consider deeply "how to transform the tensionality of an in-between space into a generative site for the mutual transformation of all participants" (Wang, 2004, p. 3).

Wang's (2014) later theorizing moves away from the third space and instead looks to the zero space as "a space of nonviolence, that is more playful, fluid, and inclusive" (p. 166); a space that "symbolizes the wholeness of life and the sources of creativity" (p. 167). The zero space theorizes the entanglement of time, place and space in order to attend to the narratives of distinct lived experiences as well as the potential for a new awareness of becoming. This contrasting view of space allows for greater inclusivity and harmony. Wang (2014) writes, that the zero space speaks to "both the temporality of life history...and stories in specific places as well as a specific individual's responses to her or his own time and place" (p. 167). While notably different from one another, each of these conceptualizations suggest that in opening spaces we may recognize our beingness, relationality, intersectionality and transformational potentials.

In the classroom, the teachers and students may approach the curriculum as a lived plan (Aoki, 1986) to discover complex historical content, such as the Holocaust, Indian Removal, or the Civil Rights Movement, or read together the novel *Beloved* (Morrison, 1987) or *Jane Eyre* (Bronte, 2000) and encounter not only lived experiences different from their own, but spaces of complicated interconnectedness. The curriculum as community building may emerge when the teacher and students enter together into the protected space of the curriculum and the space set apart for the potential of transformation and interconnectedness. Curriculum as community building may emerge in the third space (Wang, 2004) when the tensions, difficulties and problematics of history, memory, and differing cultures and lived experiences intersect in the site of teaching and learning. Protecting and persevering these spaces of tension and opposition, communal relationality may emerge as the embodied lives of teachers and learners approach difficult texts and difficult histories with an attentiveness to how shared strain and how deep care for difference within these spaces may allow for personal transformation and relational engagements with all members of the class. Likewise, when the zero space is acknowledged in the classroom it may cultivate inclusivity, harmony, play, fluidity and creativity when teachers and students together are enabled to recognize their individual contextualized responses to the curriculum, (as-planed or as-lived), and to explore the how and why the teaching and learning brings to their attention their own being and transformational becoming, as well as their place in the emerging interconnectedness to the class participant and the larger world beyond the classroom.

In neither case is the curriculum narrowly limited to an attentiveness to discrete content, skills, or material, (as important as they may be), but instead to attend to the

expansiveness of the curriculum for the potential of community building to emerge. Beyond the knowledge of a historical moment or the text of a novel, how might teachers and learners engage in the fluidity and creativity of their own intersectional and interconnected becoming? Again, we cannot limit our understanding to the selection of the "right" texts or the "most challenging" historical moments as constructing a curriculum of community building, far from it, instead I suggest that every text and every content area can be opened as a space in which both the complexities and creativities of our lived experiences within teaching and learning have the ability to draw us to apprehend our potential for transformation and relationality.

In theorizing space, whether from the abstractions of Heidegger's (1962/1962) "being-in-the-world" to the conceptualizations of space as they are attuned to the human experiences within these spaces, such as Wang (2004, 2014) explores, the significance of opening space is for the purpose of lived experiential encounter, with the self, but far more importantly, with others.

The Place of Experience

Space, as I have explored it, is a context-free site which may open up an awareness of being, transformation and relationality. Space is not locatable geographically, but rather an experiential arena of awareness, becoming, encounter, and transformation. Place, on the other hand, speaks to social environments (Ng-A-Fook, 2007). Place as Massey (1994) describes it, is "social relations stretched over space" (p. 23, as cited in Bondi, p.142). Place is tied to the human world of engagement, and while not exclusively, most often place is connected to tangible, material, geographical locals. For Casemore (2008), "place signifies the diverse and intersecting worlds in which I

dwell" and the "particular contexts in which I am immersed as well as my subjective interaction with these private, social and aesthetic spaces" (p. 1). Casemore (2008) further explains that place is multidimensional, including both "the object world" of the "public sphere and the localities of my internal life" (p. 1). I understand significant complexity in these descriptions of place, for they are simultaneously social spheres, located in the physical world, but also the socio-geographic localities to which the awareness of subjectivity and intersubjectivity are tied. Bondi (2005) adds to the complexity of place by explaining that even if we can identify a specific locatable place, each place is nevertheless "unbounded, open, porous, fluid entities, rather than bounded, fixed and stable bundles of attributes (p. 142). This unboundedness of place is possible because place is produced "through the dynamic interconnections between and among places and social relations (Bondi, 2005, p. 142). As I understand it, these descriptions of place highlight the socio-geographic descriptors that give shape and form to a place as well as the human relationships with place. Rather than an abstracted site of being, place produces intersectional, relational human encounters that work upon both the individual and the collective humanity that engage within the place. Places offer definitions and descriptors to our being and experiences.

While place can seem to frame the borders in which human experience may occur, place can also be crafted, re-ordered, or dismantled for the purposes of disruptive, creative, and emergent human experiences. In some cases, the invitation to place is generative, while in other cases, place speaks of loss (Casemore, 2008), to experiences of estrangement, diminishment, abandonment, and exile. The Canadian curriculum theorist, Cynthia Chambers (1999) explores *topos* as "the particular places and regions where we

live and work - and how these places are inscribed in our theorizing as either presence or absence" (p. 148, as cited in Ng-A-Fook, 2007, p. 12). Chambers (1999) further explains that the work of recovery is required to understand "the topos, especially of imaginary and physical landscape and our history within it, [and that through recovery] we may find a place to begin the difficult work of reaching into and across the territories of difference (p. 148, as cited in Ng-A-Fook, 2007, p. 12). In these conceptualizations, the parameters of place and the lived experiences that emerge therein, must be examined not for their generative potential, but for the purposes of disruption, border crossing, and the hopeful *not yet* of reclamation, renovation, or restoration. In acknowledging the problematics of space, a potential emerges for dismantling and reconstructive embodied engagements within the socio-geographics of place. Following Casemore (2008), we must become attentive "to the metaphors of place that govern [our] sense of identity and community" (p. 125) and struggle to understand where, how and when "the idea of place circumscribes neither stable identity nor coherent community, but rather an unceasing tension between self and the world" (p.125).

Conceptualizing place is complex. On one hand, place can be invitational, a defined location or *topos* into which we may enter and anticipate encounter, intersectionality, relationality and transformation. On the other hand, place can also provide the delimiting contours of complex social relations as they thread through our multiple lived worlds. Place in this alternate context concretizes loss, absence and experiences of isolation. Within this tensionality of place, I am drawn to Janet Miller's (2005) challenge to "increase [our] tolerance for ambiguity and for a conception of constantly shifting spaces as momentary places of both connection and solitude" (p. 83).

Miller's examination of these doubled spaces/places encourage us "to claim connections as well as to grapple with difference" (p. 83). If we come to respond to Miller's challenge and what Casemore (2008) calls the demands of place, we may well step into new territories wherein our works of the body may contribute to the possible emergence of communities of difference. Huebner (1987), declares that "man is a transcendent being" by which he means that mankind "has the capacity to transcend what he is to become something that he is not" (p. 326). In opening space and honoring place, we recognize the curriculum as community building not as systematized, nor is it abstract, but when a space is made for the works of the body to engage in specific places, the emergence of the other community, the community inclusive and honoring of difference, may come into being.

The Table: A Metaphor of Opening Space and Placemaking

As with my examples of holding time, I believe that offering the metaphor of the table may provide a beneficial illustration and point of praxis wherein the opening of space and the practice of placemaking may be described.

A short time ago I met some colleagues at a bookstore that has an open room with six or so tables for sipping coffee, reading books, and visiting with friends. The room can also be rented for a small fee and used for meetings and other gatherings. The four of us were doing some planning together and had brought along papers, books and laptops, so we pulled two tables together, sipped our coffee, and went about our planning. After a time, the bookstore manager inquired if we had rented the space. When we told her that we had not rented the room but were using the free space she expressed her consternation that because we had rearranged the room by pulling two tables together, we were clearly

holding a meeting. Even though only one other person was using the room and a number of others could also share the room if they desired to, these details were of little importance. Evidently, the key distinction for what made our sitting together a meeting, and required a renting of the room, was the moving of the tables. We will know better for next time.

This simple object lesson in moving the tables is beneficial because it speaks to the intentionality of opening space and of placemaking, for in both efforts there exists an anticipation of what will emerge at the table, and of what may be possible when we come together at the table. Teachers arrange the desks and tables in their classrooms for differing and distinct purposes, opportunities, expectations, and desired outcomes. And both inside and outside of the classroom we set the table differently for the type of meal or the task at hand, and we come to the table with various and sometimes conflicting expectations for what will be served and the human engagements that may emerge: consider a banquet table, reading table, picnic table, registration table, card table, boardroom table, bistro table, folding table, and so many others. In each of these different examples the space and the place of the table works upon us, for depending how the table is set we will respond in differing ways.

The word "table" that we use to describe the piece of furniture comes from the Latin word *tabula*, which describes an open space for inscription, thus the word *tabula* may also become a "tablet" as well. This poetic etymology illuminates how the coming into the locatable and physical place of the table may inscribe itself upon the space, as well as our being. Remember Huebner's (1987) belief that space can encourage a "moment of vision" (p. 329) for the individual's own potentiality to be grasped. And

Jardine's (2012) belief that "spaces open up and things can happen to us, and our lives can be shaped" (p. 11) by and within the opening of the space. The table as a metaphor suggest both the physical place as well as the ontological space of being. It signifies one example of the "'here' of experience" (Harrison, 2002, p. 350, as cited in Casemore, 2008, p. 11).

Tables carry connotations of gathering and assembly. This is likely why my colleagues and I were scolded for pulling tables together in the bookstore - we were assembling. Tables are spaces of relationality and intersectionality. Tables are also spaces for breaking of bread, a space of nourishment, communion, and companionship - for our word "companion" comes from the old French and means quite literally, one who breaks bread with another. The metaphor of the table highlights how the piece of furniture is a physical place that brings us into proximity with others, and an ontological space of being in which our presence stands on the horizon of encounter where the possibility of emergence exists.

Returning to the Circle of Emergence

Returning to the start of the circle I described at the beginning of the chapter, I once more approach the concept of emergence to consider the possibilities of embodied emergence in time-space-place as the interconnected openings in which we may reimagine curriculum as community building. Wang (2009) reminds us that "emergence encourage[s] a sense of flow, a flow in time and place, a flow that connects as it moves through different landscapes, a flow that also springs from pause and dwelling, a flow that carries us out of where we are stuck to new views" (p. 4). It has been my argument throughout this dissertation that we are indeed stuck and in need of new views. In

response to the estrangement, intolerance, prejudice, fear, anxiety and divisiveness of our contemporary socio-cultural-political moment, we are challenged to look clear-eyed at the forces of exclusion and homogenization that create ruptures in community and to take up the embodied work to "constantly set right anew" (Hannah Arendt, 1969, p. 192, as cited in Jardine, 2012, p. 2) our world which is in great need for new imaginations of community.

Standing in the midst of the chaotic flood waters rushing in (Putnam, 2000), the work I am proposing is to discover how to hold ourselves open to the *not yet* of a community which is inclusive of alterity. Jardine (2012) describes the "intergenerational task of opening, protecting, and cultivating...free spaces" (Jardine, 2012, p. 4), to which I would also add the intergenerational task of holding time open, as well as recognizing the borders and boundaries of place, all of which are needed for the transformational emergence central to the curriculum as community building. The *not yet* of the community yet to come, the *not yet* of the democracy yet to come (Derrida, 1997), and the *not yet* (Greene, 1995) existential transformation of our individual and always-already communal lived experiences with others, all hover in anticipation of emergence and what may come into being, and then to move beyond anticipation to stand at the moment of arrival and apprehend the moment of emergence.

The feminist perspectives I explored in chapter three challenged us to recognize our porous edges and fluid boundaries and to welcome the strangeness that we each possess, and through this tension-filled embrace of difference, to resist homogenizing and exclusionary practices and allow alterity to be invited to reside among us. Situated within this context of difference, in chapter four I proposed that the possibility of

transformation and nurturance of self and other through the metaphor of maternity suggests that through the gifts and works of the body we may resist violence and engage in the lived experiences of curriculum as community building. To build the other community, the community of difference, requires times-spaces-places for emergence.

Whatever reimaginations of the community of difference we hold, they may only come into being through lived experiences with the unknown other, by opening womb-like spaces of welcome and emergence within ourselves and within the lived time-space-place of our world. Therefore, emergence depends upon conceiving of time-space-place as pregnant with transformational relational opportunities. Emergence depends upon recognizing the individual as situated as one-amongst and embedded in always-already interconnectedness of the communal body, and that the opening and holding of time-space-place is the multidirectional work of each individual body as well as the communal body. Emergence depends upon honoring, yet challenging, the historical, socio-geographic complexities of place and the potentiality of border crossing. Emergence depends upon attuning our awareness to the nowness and horizon of change, possibility, and the new that may come into being when we open time and hold space. Emergence depends as well upon apprehending our "living the world together" (Jardine, et al, 2003, as cited in Doll, 2008, p. 202) and recognizing our co-laboring for the common good, what Miller (2005) describes as "the ways that we might reshape historically rigid boundaries between public and private into spaces that also include notions of communities and collaborations without hierarchies but also without mandated consensus" (p. 82). If we are able to hold open time-space-place for the gifts and works of the body, I believe that the lived experiences and complicated conversations of the

curriculum may be transformational, and through our individual and collective transformation we may become builders of the other community, the community of difference.

A Story of Fire: An Emergence of the Curriculum as Community Building

At the beginning of my second year as a school leader, our entire school was destroyed by a catastrophic fire. Our school had moved into an historic 1926 elementary school building that had previously been closed due to underpopulation. As part of our work to modify the building for the needs of a robust high school program, a number of construction projects were undertaken over the summer months, including the redesign of a classroom to become a chemistry lab. This work continued into the early days of the school year, and when students finished classes and left for the day, construction crews resumed their work. One evening construction workers using power tools somehow produced sparks that smoldered throughout the night and in the early hours of the morning, just days after the school year had begun, the building exploded into flames. The devastating fire resulted in a total loss of the building and all of its contents.

Now, six years after the fire, I have come to recognize how the fire became for me and for my school a kind of *shed*, that metaphoric space created in the loom, which holds open time, space, and contextualized place, and into which the weaving of the curriculum as community building began to emerge.

Everyone was devastated by the fire: teachers, students, parents, alumni, administrators, neighbors who lived by the school, and the larger community of the city who had deep ties to the historic building that had been destroyed. As a school leader, what lay ahead for me was an uncertain path that led straight into the collective

destabilizing spaces of deep grief, anger, frustration, uncertainty, and instability that accompanied the unfamiliar labor of reconstructing, reclaiming, and rebuilding all that had been lost. Within these tensions my attention was attuned to how we might step into this difficult time and space and perhaps draw together the disparate threads of the members of our always-already connected school "community" into a communal body, and recognize that all members of our school stood around the circle of this trauma, each holding vastly different perspectives, needs, desires, hopes, and wounds. This context of disruption and profound human difference was the site at which I hoped we might come to apprehend the emergence of the lived, embodied, internalized experience of curriculum as community building.

In the year of "recovery" that followed the fire, I worked to locate and hold open spaces for the telling of stories of loss and fear and pain, and spaces where individuals might listen to other's stories, stories of difference that I hoped might open points of connectivity. Even with these efforts, I observed that many faced isolation, confusion, alienation, and withdrawal from relationships as they struggled to find their place in the web of needs, demands, and priorities. We wept together: school leaders, teachers, students, parents, and strangers we did not know who had attended the elementary school decades before we moved in. I received the gift of comfort again and again, and I was surprised again and again when I became the target of accusation and suspicion. I experienced deep care and discovered the surprise of interconnectedness in the compassion of *suffering with*, when schoolchildren from states far away mailed our school care packages full of love notes telling us their own stories of schools lost to fire.

The time and space following the fire was defined by heightened tensions, and while I worked to hold open time and space to deal with experiences of disconnection (many of which ran as destabilizing undercurrents predating the fire), I came to see that while experiences of belonging and togetherness may emerge in these spaces, some threads of fragmentation and disconnection resist being neatly woven back in. Yes, boundaries and borders were crossed. Yes, new voices were heard, and powerful voices stood in respectful silence, and complicated conversations were engaged again and again. But others withdrew from conversation, and some left the school when we relocated after the fire to a much more socially complex area of town. While some members of the school chose not to engage, others opened themselves to the gifts and works of the eyes, ears, and mouth, embodying interconnectedness and interdependence, building community as the invisible byproduct of our desperate need to be seen and to see, to hear and be heard, to speak in wonderfully fragmented voices and in broken stories and to catch a glimpse of our deep relational potential.

If the curriculum as plan could be imagined as the specific to-do list of recovery, and the curriculum as lived could be our living experiences of the recovery process, I believe, the curriculum as community building was the multi-dimensional layers of embodied encounters within the ecosystem of our interconnectedness, interdependence, and relational opportunity that made it possible for new forms of relationality to emerge.

While this work remains unfinished, I observed how the curriculum as community building emerged in multiple dimensions. After the fire, some teachers returned to their classroom with transformative compassion for their students. Some students engaged in mutually exchanged responsibility for other students and for their teachers. In some

classrooms, texts, content, and pedagogy serving as the context of teaching and learning also became points for intersecting and engaging the trauma and chaos of our lived experiences, both with the fire and with our individual subjective difficulties. As a school leader, I encountered more poignantly our *situatedness*, our place, within a larger matrix of teaching and learning that has been ongoing in our city and in our nation. I recognized with greater nuance and respect how the school serves as the location of connection to society and the broader matrix of civic, socio-cultural, and economic engagement.

I stumbled into the open space of the *shed* and discovered a more gracious humility of leadership, in which leadership means to be one-amongst, a pilgrim sharing the sacred journey of becoming with all those in the school. I also discovered what it means to be made a stranger, the "they" that is made the object of mistrust and suspicion. As in maternity, I was expanded and stretched, bound up in the dynamic tensions that lead to transformation and relationship with others. The curriculum as community building illuminated that fortitude, sacrifice, responsibility, and compassion are difficult gifts and works of the body that emerge in specific times, spaces, and places, and that as a leader, I may stand in the circle of giving and receiving, or find myself outside looking in. I recognized that it was not my work to craft a strategy for building community after the fire; my work was to struggle, resist, and labor so that the *shed* might be constructed – to craft time and space, to embody the holding open of the circle, so that the emergence of the curriculum as community building has the chance to emerge.

The story of the fire is not a story of process, or strategy, or instrumental development of community. The story of the fire is not tidy or neatly resolved. The story

of the fire is the narrative of my own being and becoming transformed. It is the story of encountering interconnectedness and isolation while striving for experiences of mutual interdependence and the emergence of relationality. It is the story of the ecosystem of teaching and learning and spaces of potential to be attentive to our human beingness. It is the story of the curriculum, (understood as lived experience and complicated conversation), holding open the possibility of emerging as community building.

Welcome

Wang (2004) explains that "home is nowhere in the Derridean sense; home is everywhere, wherever stranger/strangeness, other/otherness, foreigner/foreignness are welcome, regardless of the limitations of time and place" (p. 9). In this way, our responsibility to cultivating a sense of home, or to building community where the belongingness of home is possible, is simple; it is the commitment to the emergence of *welcome*. Volf (1996) also believes that our task is "to give ourselves to others and 'welcome' them, to readjust our identities to make space for them, [which] is prior to any judgement about others, except that of identifying them in their humanity" (p. 29). While their perspectives are different, both statements draw our attention to the work and the responsibility of welcoming - the invitation to belonging within community.

Accepting this responsibility is difficult work. It is not prescriptive, systematized, or organizational work. Instead the work of responsibility, the work of welcoming, the work of the curriculum as community building is positioning oneself to encounter and engage in emergence, and to bring to bear the works of the body, and communal space and time, such that transformational spaces are opened for others as well. This work is

always the simultaneous always-already interconnected and intersectional work of the individual with/in the communal body.

Those who desire to see the other community come into being are called to the responsibility to be table makers, or those that make ready the room and push the tables together. To be those who light candles, or recite blessings, or imbue traditional rituals with new life and invitation. To be those who open spaces of becoming and transformation by holding time with pregnant questions and awaiting the multiplicity of answers from without and within. To be those who anticipate the arrival of the stranger in their unknown and still-becoming *not yet* selves. To be those who draw chairs nearer in proximity to the unknown other and to the alterity in others, listening closely for the surprising kinships verisimilitudes that may be illuminated. To be those who bake bread and embrace their fragility of being in the symbolic and actual breaking of bread that invites companionship. To be those who are boundary crossers, those who walk through unfamiliar doors, and cross lines of demarcation and diminishment, and those that shine light on the complex socio-geographic contexts of place. To be those who practice holding themselves in a state of *adventus*, awaiting and participating in the arrival of light in the darkness.

My reimagination suggests that the emergence of something new, which follows our anticipation of the *not yet*, arrives through the works of the body in time-space-place wherein we have the potential to be transformed and may become transformers - the builders of the community of difference. Our communal and individual transformational potential arrives at the horizon of the curriculum as community building, which cultivates moments of emergence situated in time and space, and contextualized in locatable places.

To first reimagine a different community and then to participate in the building of this community, we must recognize the ongoing and perpetual nowness and future horizon of emergence, and that we may become welcomers or find ourselves welcomed through the in-the-world, lived, embodied, intersectional engagement with the other - the goal of which is relationality.

CHAPTER VI

RELATIONALITY AND THE DESIRE TO ENCOUNTER THE OTHER

"Complexity is our only safety and love is the only key to our maturity." (Baldwin, 2010, p. 201)

"Compassion rests, however, not on the capacity to see similarity instead of difference, but rather on the capacity to live with the unexpected and unknown, to live with the radically other without attempting to annihilate or overcome otherness by seeking in the stranger some version of ourselves." (Chinnery, 2006, p. 335)

"To speak of the imaginal world is nothing less than to contemplate a metaphysics of Being where subject and object are born together in the same creative act of transcendental imagination." (Jambert, 1983, as cited in Hendry, 2011, p. 31)

The Other Community

Throughout the previous chapters runs the unseemly coarse thread of human disconnection. This thread of estrangement, exile, otherness, strangeness, foreignness, difference, dismemberment, and exclusion, is consistently interwoven with reimaginations of human togetherness and community, even if at times it is hidden under other threads or on the back of the textile. Exclusion is the tangled knot of threads in

which the desire for the *beloved community* arises (King, 1957). As I pursue the possibility of reimagining curriculum as community building, my hope has been to join those who also consider how we might resist the darkening forces of exclusion, controlling homogeneity and assimilation, or threatening isolation - the great perils of our time. The oppressive shadows of our contemporary moment cry out for light to ward off the looming threats of human experience. Nagler (2004) explains "today, as the world is convulsed by ethnic and psuedoethnic and still other hatreds, people caught up in such hatreds cannot remotely remember that they share an underlying unity with surface differences; they see only differences, which then take on monstrous proportions" (p. 272). Beyond the menacing specter of human difference, other subjective threats from the marketplace, technology, pervasive inequities, and the desperate retreat into the presumed safety of the private life (Pinar, 2004, 2012) each contribute to the growing sense of disconnectedness, fear, and anxiety. Within this tumultuous context of human isolation and threatening difference, many small points of lights emerge, illuminating the hopeful path towards building the *other community*, the community which honors and nurtures difference.

What I simply call the *other community* (following Biesta, 2004), various theorists have instead crafted poetic language to describe, seeking to attend to the generative potential of human togetherness beyond difference. Earlier in chapter two when I explored the story of community, the names of these other communities emerged. You will recall the "community without community," (Derrida, 1997), the "non-identical community" (Caputo, 1997, as cited by Chinnery, 2006), the "community without consensus," (Miller, 2010), "polyvalent communities" (Kristeva, 1993), "dissensus"

(Ziarek, 2001) and "the community of those who have nothing in common" (Lingis, 1994). In each of these conceptualizations of community, difference rather than commonality is the orienting characteristic. And in each, collective expressions of human togetherness struggle to emerge beyond the narrow borderlines of the community constructed by *soil* and *blood,* which I examined in chapter two, and to forge generative possibilities for human togetherness which respond to our individual and collective experiences of threat, disruption, and disorientation.

Thus, rather that obscuring the coarse thread of exclusion and isolation that emerges as a response to difference, the other community incorporates and interweaves this objectionable thread, recognizing that it is enmeshed and cannot be extricated. Whatever new and noble textile of community we may imagine and hope to weave, the other community comes into being within the tensionality, pressures and conflicts of our ignoble human history and ongoing practices of Othering those who we deem to be unlike us and unworthy of community with us. What remains then, is not the task of overcoming the problematics of difference, but instead, the pursuit of relationality with and through difference by our lived and embodied experiences in time and space wherein transformative encounters within ourselves and with others may emerge.

Relationality in the Face of Difference

In my examination of the generative possibilities that exist in the community of difference, I have drawn upon diverse intellectual traditions as the threads used in my own weaving. Prominent threads of poststructural feminism have been mingled with other threads to further illuminate the complexities, contrasts, and tensions that exist in understandings of relationality. Through this interweaving, my effort has been to portray

how we may come to see relationality as the dynamic tension and the complex intersection of difference and interconnectivity through which we may expand our potential for human togetherness and to reimagine a future community inclusive of difference. Relationality, or the ontology of kinship, attends to both the self and the other and depends upon what Wang (2004) describes as "a transformative and creative self in relation with the other" (p. 121). Relationality first elevates the awareness of our human beingness, as that which is malleable, creative, open and able to be transformed, then it illuminates our human interconnectivity by drawing our attention to the interaction, the movement, and the exchange intrinsic to the possibility of human engagement.

The potential of relationality does not depend upon likeness or similarity, but instead it provides for a possibility of recognizing difference as a common trait of human beingness. In this way, relationality allows for the "coming together in [our] pluralities and [our] differences," as Quinn (2014, p. 219) explains it, for the purpose of achieving a kind of relational ethics, the principle Abowitz (1999) describes as the "difference in community as a constant state of being-in-common" (p. 153). This being-in-common and difference-in-common allows for human relationships, between the self and other, in which we are invited into the struggle Miller (2005) identifies, where we "claim connection as well as to grapple with difference" (p. 83). This labor is complicated and ultimately unresolvable, yet it is an expansive project of grace, the continual forward pursuit of deep human connectivity embedded within the context of profound difference. Grumet (1988) describes this work as "the task of recognizing unity in what we see as separate, the task of claiming exemption, as well, from the universal law and claiming separateness despite the wish for unity" (p. 191). Such language highlights the tension,

struggle and difficulties inherent in the work of relationality. While we find ourselves embedded in the always-already interconnection of what Arendt (1958) describes as the "webs of human relationships" (p. 182), we are challenged to seek something beyond tolerance, or the endurance of difference - something akin to reconciliation, which transforms us and draws us into responsible relational engagement with others, even if this relationality contains ruptures, disjunctions, tensions, and instabilities.

Relationality depends upon the poetic and poststructural recognition that we are all strangers and others, which I explored deeply in chapter three, as well as the honoring of "our shared condition of existential lack or incompleteness" as Chinnery (2006, p. 332) describes it. Only in this poetically fragile space can we acknowledge the self and other as sharing in difference and begin to conceptualize relationality along the terms offered by Biesta (2004), as "a permanent coexistence with the stranger" (p. 313). Making my own distinct poststructural feminist launching point from his statement, I believe the coexistence with the stranger is not the mere politeness or aloof forbearance of difference, but rather a coexistence which is a vibrant ecosystem of relational interdependence necessary for growth, development, and thriving. Far from Edenic, utopian, or naive, the other community that emerges out of relationality demands that we practice holding open spaces of complication, vulnerability, and tension within ourselves and within our communal engagements. In this way, the other community incorporates Hershock's (2012) framework of relational dynamics such that we are challenged to see difference not as the simple reducationary "fact about the absence of identity or sameness" but rather as "an opening of specific directions for relational change and creativity" (p. 28). In this way, holding difference *for* the benefit of community

(Hershock, 2012) allows us to move into new experiences of transformational relationality where we may come to cultivate newer values, values that allow us to imagine how our selves and our communities may be "enhanced by the differences of others" (Hershock, 2012, p. 254).

This work resists being pulled into the orbit of simplistic understandings of relationship and community, standing instead in the place of complication. We hold the hope that embracing difference may lead to creative possibilities, generative transformations of the self and the other, and new human relationships. And we hold open the space of difference for the *not yet* of relationality and the *not yet* of community, which recognizes the tension, irreconcilability, and perhaps even threat of this difficult work. In this tension, Fowler (2005) encourages that we must choose to stay in and stay with difficulty, for difficulty is central to opening up new possibilities. Whatever reimagined relationships and community we hope may emerge, difficulty must be embraced. Wang (2014) clarifies that staying with difficulty "does not necessarily mean remaining in the original site of difficulty, but working with difficulty through multiple and multidimensional movements that lead to breakthroughs" (p. 40). In this, I understand that there is movement and transformative potential within and through difficulty, even if difficulty is never fully resolved. The choice then may not be to dream of overcoming difficulty, but instead, to choose to cultivate capacity, and perhaps even prowess, and continuously engage sites of difficulty with courage and creativity.

In offering these possible outcomes of relationality in the face of difference, it must be clear that these ideas are not an alternate route by which to return to earlier ideas of community where all individuals partake and participate in a shared or collective

identity - only with a "safer" agreed-upon identity of difference. Chinnery (2006) proposes that this kind of human relationality is based "not on the capacity to see similarity instead of difference, but rather on the capacity to live with the unexpected and unknown, to live with the radically other without attempting to annihilate or overcome otherness by seeking in the stranger some version of ourselves" (p.335). Relationality seen from this perspective constructs spaces of responsible engagements that allow for belonging to be created within and among the greatest diversity, spaces that simultaneously hold the ruptures, disjunctions, tensions, instabilities as characteristics of relationality. Further beyond this idea, if we are to acknowledge Kristeva's (2002) encouragement to allow for infinite possibility, we must also allow for the possibility of voluntary non-belonging, no matter how counterintuitive it may seem to the desire for experiencing togetherness and the hope of building community.

Thus, within the difficult opening of relationality, we find the tensions of difference, the potential of creative and generative transformation, the possibilities of belonging, and the valuing of the Other robust enough that it can honor the paradox of productive non-belonging. Within these complexities and tensions, what makes relationships among those who are profoundly different possible? It is my belief that the interwoven threads of love, nonviolence, compassion, and responsibility may come together, and from them may emerge not only the context through which relationality becomes a real possibility, but the context through which we might catch a glimpse of the yet unrealized promises of democracy and the desire for the *beloved community* (King, 1957) as well.

The Potential of the Relational

I have situated the perceived obstacles to relationality as functioning simultaneously as the bridges or doorways through which relationship and community may come into being. Human alterity stands as both the obstacle to human togetherness, as well as the potential hope for a new kind of dwelling together, where alterity is transformed into valuable attributes for a thriving community. The other community therefore depends upon a fervent valuing of selves in the journey of becoming, as well as a fervent valuing of the multiplicity of differences that emerge in and through the work of becoming. Ziarek (2001) suggest that the "ethos of becoming holds hands with the 'ethos of alterity'" (p. 2), and I see in her imagery the complexity and grace of emergent and uncertain human futures as they converge in the *not yet* of community where all are invited to dwell together. Volf (1996) questions, "what kind of selves we need to become in order to live in harmony with others" (p. 21)? And this is the question of relationality: how might we "explore the depths of our own relation to each other" (Miller, 2005, p. 162) and come to imagine togetherness and community?

In his theological and metaphysical exploration, *I and Thou*, Buber (1937) proposes that we may come to recognize our deep-seated relatedness by apprehending in ourselves and the other something beyond the objectifying limitations that govern our perceptions. When I speak of myself as *I*, I recognize a self that is transcendent, not stagnant and limited, but capable of apprehension, creative and possibility. When *I* interact with other people in the world, *I* may perceive them and engage with them as if they are an *It* or a *Thou*. Whatever I perceive as *It*, I make into an object and whatever I perceive as *Thou*, I apprehend as sacred, beyond my apprehension, and worthy of honor.

Buber's complex exploration reveals that we may position ourselves in contrasting engagements with the people we encounter in our world. On one hand, I may make of them an object, an *It*, and limit not only their potential but my own potential of being and relationality. On the other hand, I can ennoble myself and the other person by recognizing them as *Thou*. Buber (1937) explains, "the object is not duration, but creation, suspension, a breaking off and cutting clear and hardening, absence of relation and of present being. True beings are lived in the present, the life of objects is in the past" (p. 13). I understand Buber to mean that if I objectify the person that stands before me (as an *It)*, I make of her a container of past meanings, a static, inanimate, lifeless object without a present and living humanity.

In contrast, if I open my being to the possibility of the person in front of me as something beyond *It*, as a *Thou*, I am surprised by the transformational power of my own becoming and the generative power of the *Thou* which stands before me. Buber's (1937) poetic language frames it this way: "the Thou meets me through grace—it is not found by seeking. But my speaking of the primary word to it is an act of my being, is indeed the act of my being" (p. 11). In this description I see the relationship with *Thou* as generative, creative, and transformative. The recognition of the sacred other, the *Thou*, surprises me with a glimpse of my own becoming, as well as a glimpse of the becoming of the one who stands before me. In fact, the recognition of the *Thou* standing before me somehow illuminates and animates her, even if she is unaware. It is as if the glance of my eye in recognition of her as *Thou* enlivens her to future potential, future growth, future becoming. Buber (1937) explains that, "even if the man to whom I say Thou is not aware of it in the midst of his experience, yet relation may exist. For Thou is more than It

realizes" (p. 9). Through the grace of recognizing another person as *Thou*, we both come to occupy the present moment of apprehension of our being, as well as the future of transformation - the now and the *not yet*. And in this attentiveness to transformative recognition, it may also be possible to imaginatively reconstruct the past to discover alternate possibilities. Noddings (2003) reflects on Buber's surprise apprehension and describes it as "ecstasy" or the "momentary and exquisite realization of relatedness. It cannot be summoned, and yet one must be prepared in order for it to happen" (p. 172). The beauty of this ecstasy is the choice to position oneself towards others in the world in anticipation, even if we cannot directly summon the experience of transformation and relationality.

There can be no relationship with *It*, only the delimiting collections of inanimate meanings, meanings which crust and solidify, preventing the generative potential of relationality. In our contemporary moment, rife with dehumanization, intolerance and marginalization, we wrestle not only with the ways in which we make *Its* of the others in our world, and how we ourselves are made *Its* by others; but we are also complicit in our own objectification. Through our posthuman technological curated identities, our performativity of self through consumerism, commodification and market identities, we make ourselves *Its*. In school classrooms, we data-collect, standardize, measure, and objectify our students, making them static containers of past meanings, while at the same time objectifying the identities of growth and success we anticipate. And in the teaching and learning spaces that we form outside of traditional schooling, we similarly construct paradigms of objectification under the guise of productivity, efficiency, and achievement. The multiple intersecting levels of community, both those inside and outside the school,

cannot be imagined or built if our paradigms resist relationality and perpetuate an understanding of others as objects that carry whichever meaning we choose to impose upon them, even if those multiplicity of meanings appear to us as benevolent or value-free.

Relationality cannot exist in a construction of *I-It*. Relationality can only exist when we position ourselves such that we may encounter the *I-Thou* (Buber, 1937). The *I-It* constitutes something other than relationality, a fragmented and transactional relationship. *I-Thou* invites both the one who perceives and the one who is perceived in a transformational relationship. From Buber's conceptualization of the relationship between *I* and *Thou* emerges something beyond the reanimation of objects and beyond rehumanization. What emerges is the apprehension of the sacredness of being, and the love of the other. Buber (1937) explains that "love is the responsibility of an I for a Thou" (p. 15). The understanding that I derive from Buber focuses my attention upon the potential for relationality as something made possible by our awareness of our own becoming and an openness of the human spirit to recognize and apprehend the sacred life and becoming of another individual. Through this transformed awareness, the problematics of difference that interrupt the potential of community may be countered by opening oneself to be surprised by the *Thou* in others. Furthermore, in our always-already interconnectedness, cultivating times and space in which meetings of grace are valued and prioritized, we may come to discover invitational openings for togetherness or mutual indwelling, where the always-already existent communal body finds itself remade into an invitational and welcoming embodiment of encounter and belonging.

Love: The Courage to Encounter

Whereas Buber (1937) suggests that love emerges as the natural response to encountering the sacred being of the Other as *Thou*, Paulo Freire (1970) suggests that love is the first act of humanizing the oppressed, and that the act of loving the other comes before any other act of education, emancipation, justice, or freedom. According to Schoder (2010), "Freire's theory of education, his pedagogy of the oppressed, incorporated an implicit theory of love that aimed at creating greater love as a necessary prerequisite in our ongoing pursuit of full humanity" (p. 2). Not unlike Buber, Freire observed that humans were reduced into objects or "things" through lived experiences with systems and acts of oppression. Rendered as objects, oppressed people were without power, voice, opportunity and potential. This power structure dehumanized both the oppressed and their oppressors. Freire proposed that through the foundational work of love, emancipation could occur and restore humanity to both the oppressed and their oppressors.

According to Schoder (2010), Freire's foundational belief is that "every human act can be an act of love if it consciously strives to foster fairness, respect, and gratitude—as well as love's other virtues—through all of love's domains" (p. 83). Within this expansive vision however, love must always be seen as a risk, as the bold confrontation with power systems that resist transformation. Freire (1970) writes,

> Because love is an act of courage, not of fear, love is commitment to other men. No matter where the oppressed are found, the act of love is commitment to their cause—the cause of liberation. And, this commitment, because it is loving, is dialogical. As an act of bravery, love cannot be sentimental; as an act of freedom,

> it must not serve as a pretext for manipulation. It must generate other acts of freedom; otherwise it is not love. Only by abolishing the situations of oppression is it possible to restore the love which that situation made impossible. If I do not love the world—if I do not love life—if I do not love men—I cannot enter into dialogue. (p. 77, 78)

Freire's pedagogical model emboldens love as active, powerful and disruptive. Through love, he rearranges the relationship between the oppressors and the oppressed and frames new engagements with the Other that are liberating and transformational. From this framework, the loving pedagogical relationship between the teacher and students allows for new and creative possibilities to emerge.

To imagine this love in action, perhaps we may draw upon the simple framework offered by Myss (2004) where we come to recognize "the moment-by-moment choice we each are afforded to empower or 'grace' ourselves and others or to disempower or 'disgrace' ourselves and others" (as cited in Quinn, 2014, p. 118). We encountered this notion of grace in Buber's (1937) *I- Thou* relationship. And here again, grace emerges in the choice to acknowledge the other, empower the other, animate the other, or engage the other in relationship. Whereas Freire does not define love (Schoder, 2010), he nevertheless understands love as intrinsically tied to the recognition of the human spirit and the love of being. Freire's courageous acts of love enlarges the spirit of humanity and makes possible new paradigms of existence and relationships between all people.

From another perspective, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. conceptualizes love as the transformational praxis of community and community building. King recognized agape love as a divine love that transcended eros, romantic and erotic love, and philia,

friendship and reciprocal love, and which stands as a sacred and universal love, an all-embracing love without criteria and for the sake of others' being, their humanity. King (1986) writes, "Agape does not begin by discriminating between worthy and unworthy people, or any qualities people possess. It begins by loving others for their sakes...Therefore, agape makes no distinction between friend and enemy; it is directed toward both" (p. 19). For King, this ability to stand in the place of love was essential for power and purpose to serve the renovation of society toward the formation of a just community. In King's understanding, love comes to stand at the center of nonviolence, and serves as the courageous intentional choice to resist evil and systems of oppression.

Nonviolence: Love and Interconnection Mobilized

As it was for King, Gandhi too understood the unification of power with love and the ways in which nonviolence serves as an "integrative power" (Nagler, 2004, p. 43) which is able to move beyond power as a threat and power as transaction. According to Nagler, this integrative power, serves to bridge divisions. Nagler (2004) writes, "wherever there is a human need, there is a kind of power, insofar as others can be in a position to supply or withhold that need. One of the strongest needs of the human animal is for integration, for acceptance, community, fellowship" (p. 29). The work of nonviolence through the integration of love and integrative power serves the purpose of reconciliation, to resist hatreds, hostilities, alienation, estrangement and exclusions for the purpose of cultivating fellowships and community.

As a positive force, nonviolence relies upon a keen awareness of interconnection, both with the world and with the human beings within it. Interconnectedness orients each individual to understand their place in the world, their relationship with the world, and

enables them to more clearly see the place of others in the world and, as tied to themselves. Not unlike Buber's (1937) apprehension of *I-Thou*, which elevates both myself and the one whom I encounter, through nonviolent interconnectedness, not only am I given form, meaning, and identity by my relationship to others, but this understanding of interconnectedness expands my understanding of kinships (Jardine, 2012), even with those far removed from my life. Interconnectedness ascribes value and legitimacy to each life and through nonviolent interconnectedness we are transformed to "see the humanity of that strange and distant world as indistinguishable from our own" (Robinson, 2004, p. 133, as cited in Wong & Grant, 2014, p. 38). This awareness of our entwined existence serves as a powerful mobilizing force of relationality, such that human differences and distances between lived experiences may no longer serve as reliable boundaries between otherness. According to Volf (1996), "we are who we are not because we are separate from the others who are next to us, but because we are both separate and connected, both distinct and related, the boundaries that mark our identities are both barriers and bridges" (p. 66). Through nonviolent interconnectedness, the differences that we customarily rely upon to divide ourselves from others no longer serve the purposes of exclusion and rejection.

Gandhi worked to reframe human difference as a construction of the surface, with the more valuable construction of human unity below the surface (Nagler, 2004). Gandhi's term *heart unity*, spoke to "the empathetic desire for the welfare of others, [which] could also be called "rejoicing in diversity" (Nagler, 2004, p. 270). Interconnection through a belief in *heart unity* is central for the construction of a nonviolent future. Heart unity inverts the equation and allows us to apprehend our

similarities rather than our difference. In apprehending our interconnectedness and our unity of heart, we are enabled to resist the violence of dehumanization and objectifying others. And in apprehending the unity of the human heart and human interconnectedness we are empowered to resist violence and work for the dignity, equality and freedom of all.

Through his work and writing about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa, following the end of apartheid, Archbishop Desmond Tutu addresses the concept of *ubuntu,* which expresses an awareness of our deep and far-reaching interconnectedness. Tutu (1999) writes of *ubuntu*, explaining, "my humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up, in yours. Surely this is true, we belong in a bundle of life" (p. 31). Love and nonviolence serve as keystones for conceptions of relationality in and through difference. The labor of nonviolence works to resist and overcome systems of oppression and to liberate those who have been dehumanized and excluded from equitable participatory roles in the community. Nonviolence, through interconnection and the power of love, further works to rehumanize those who have been made into objects by these systems of oppression and violence.

While the most well-known leaders of nonviolence political or social movements have been men, Gandhi (1930) believed that the future work of nonviolence belongs to women, whom he believed were uniquely positioned for this labor through their greater intuition, greater self-sacrificing, greater power of endurance, and greater courage. Pinar (2009) echoes this belief and states that nonviolence is a “feminist issue” (p. 68). Unsurprisingly, many of the lives and intellectual work of the mothers of nonviolence are hidden or misremembered in our historical narratives.

Far from an accidental player, Rosa Parks positioned herself as the instrumental catalyst for the civil right movement which emerged following her preplanned and intentional nonviolent protest (Loewen, 1995). Leymah Ghowee the leader of the Liberian Women's peace movement orchestrated nonviolent protests by women and mothers, which brought about the end of the civil war that had raged for more than a decade. By intentionally cultivating the communal power of the maternal within the community, Ghowee and hundreds of other mothers from diverse religious traditions engaged in daily nonviolent protests and democratic actions (Ghowee, 2011). Jane Addams, who I discussed in greater detail in chapter two, embodied the practices of her rich academic work and put into practice communal and democratic principles in the residential contexts of Hull House which supported the needs of profoundly diverse individuals (Hendry, 2011). Addams was instrumental in the forming of the NAACP and the ACLU and served as the president of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom which formed as a multi-national peace effort during World War I (Knight, 2010). These few examples are illustrative of the robust and diverse work of nonviolence that peace, not as passivism, but as active strategies of change built upon resistance to patriarchal violence and power and through the intentional cultivation of human interconnectivity, love, and feminine strength.

Throughout the lives and work of these mothers and fathers of nonviolence, I recognize intertwining threads: the sacredness of our humanity and being, the recognition of our deep-spirited interconnectivity, our vast potential for transformative becoming, and the power of active love. There is a notable difference of theological and religious understandings, perspectives, applications, and world views among these individuals. But

in weaving together their theories and practices, I see a deep-rooted ecumenical spirituality that motivates their work. No matter that their frameworks emerge from Jewish mysticism, Christian Catholicism and Protestantism, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism, their spiritual practices enable them to embrace mystery, our beingness, and the value and meaning of something immeasurable and beyond the material physicality of mankind. Their spiritual orientations enable them to glimpse the power of the self in relationship with the unknown other for the benefit and enrichment of both, and the ennobling of both self and other though relationality. Through apprehending the *Thou* that is the other, through the nonviolent power of love, and the *heart unity* of interconnectedness, they illuminate our always-already interconnected existence and move us to action so that we may come into relationship with those we formerly perceived only through their alterity.

You will remember that Freire (1970) contends that we must start with love, but in considering the complex intersection of these various thinkers and nonviolent activists, I contend that love[6] is not only the launching of relationality, but also the result of the labor of opening oneself. And in employing my poststructural feminist lens, I suggest that love also emerges during and through the process of labor, as in motherhood, childbirth, and the gift economy of the works of the body (as I discussed in chapter four). I suggest as well that love is the overlapping and unclosable circular pattern of relationality and community that emerges before, during, and after we engage in the labor of compassion and responsibility to the other.

[6] Love as relational, not transactional. In this way love cannot be distorted as a device of control or power.

Beyond Commonality: Compassion and Responsibility

The goal of my reimagination of community and community building is not commonality or the assimilation of difference, but instead, to encounter meaningful experiences of belonging, welcome, purpose, fellowship, and mutual indwelling where our unresolvable differences serve to enrich the communal body. To understand the curriculum as community and community building, we must come to recognize our *desire* for the beloved community, and from this desire we must discover how we may hold time open and open space as sites wherein our gifts and works of the body may become invitational, and to respond in kind, by being invited into the welcome of others.

I propose that before the curriculum-as-plan and the curriculum-as-lived (Aoki, 1986) which I considered in greater detail in chapter four, we must first acknowledge the *curriculum-as-desire*, the illuminating north star which informs what and how we plan, as well as the embodied living that emerges from the experiential curriculum. I do not contend that this *desire* is automatically in the self; it cannot be essentialized. Instead as poststructural feminism has argued, the embodiment of desire emerges in complexity and in the processes of growth and development that can result from the creative tensions of imbalance and repression. From this perspective, *curriculum-as-desire* emerges as a response to the complexities and tensions of relationality, and in this way our *desire* for the curriculum can be attentive to the labor of community building.

I conceptualize the *curriculum-as-desire* as focusing and pointing our endeavors toward the chief aims of ennobling the human condition, honoring human being and becoming, and the upward growth of the human spirit. This orienting desire responds to

the cardinal curricular pursuit - *that which is of most worth*. Whatever the curriculum-as-plan (Aoki, 1986) may include, be it pedagogical stratagems crafted for the school classroom, or the stratagems developed for teaching and learning sites outside the school building, if what is of most worth is the dignification and reconciliation of humanity as a response to estrangement and violence, then whatever we plan works, first and foremost, to open spaces of emergence for the embodied works of the body to build relationality and community before it seeks to achieve any other outcome, no matter their importance or value.

The classroom teacher planning her curriculum for algebra, reading, or human reproduction, may choose the space of difficulty and consider how her planning may open time and space for the desire to apprehend the sacred other, the ability to encounter expressions of interconnectedness and unity of heart; and the power of love to actively pursue the emancipatory and rehumanizing work of nonviolence.

Both inside and outside school classrooms, we may struggle to hold time and space open for the lived and embodied work of the curriculum; where we are ever so slowly made known in our relationships with others; where we are gradually made visible to ourselves, and may assist in making others visible to themselves, so that they, in grace, may show us who they are, who they are becoming, can be, could be. The curriculum as community building seen in this way is the ecosystem not the methodology. It is the poetry of a gracious, reciprocal showing, telling, naming, hearing and seeing which may cultivate emergence and relationality. It is the opening of space and time for our own otherness and the stranger's otherness - neither ever fully know, but swept up in the glance, seen in part but never fully apprehended. The curriculum as community building

is the yearning for contexts of emergence where our embodied gifts and works of the body may bring forth the beautiful humility of apprehending of our shared strangeness and our shared sacredness, both co-mingled in the service of life together and experiences of belonging in a community of profound human difference.

The curriculum seen in this terrifyingly hopeful way is perilously desirable. To pursue such a reimagination calls us to acknowledges what Ziarek (2001) describes as "the irreconcilable dilemma of freedom and obligation" (p. 2). In my estimation, the only way to approach this tension is through compassion and responsibility.

Graces and Tensions: My Story of School Leadership

I am a school leader: a high school principal, and a curriculum and instructional mentor, and a teacher – though I have not taught literature or writing in eight years. I walk in those shoes, with those multiple and intersecting responsibilities, nevertheless, my lived experiences have transformed me and now I see myself as *one amongst*, as a companion of the road, a kind of pilgrim – one among many, a sojourner alongside the human journey of my community of teachers and students. I live and work out of "the capacity of human beings to reach beyond themselves to what they believe should be, might be in some space they bring into being among and between themselves" (Greene, 1997, p. 2). My leadership emerges from my being and becoming and it is an emergence of graces and tensions.

My role subdivides and fractures me. At once, my eye is on both the "systems-world and the lifeworld" where I must be attentive to "instrumentalities…or management systems" as well as the "culture, meaning, and significance" of the lived experiences within the school (Sloan, 2006, p.120). Because education is always-already human

work, I face great complexity, pressures and freedoms, as well as fragmentation and incongruity in my role as a school leader. The condensation of these human events as they intersect with the instrumental demands causes me to question, where do I locate the complex intersecting and interconnecting human journey in the time and space of schooling? How do I reconcile what is required of me and what I desire? *What is of most worth?*

There are so many human stories to tell in education. As a school leader I have journeyed alongside faculty members who have married and divorced. I have celebrated long awaited pregnancies, and cried over miscarriages, and the fears of students hiding unexpected pregnancies. I have journeyed alongside a teacher whose young son was diagnosed with a brain tumor, and students whose parents are incarcerated. I have sat with students and their parents raging at the injustices of institutionalized racism and walked with students who protested the outcomes of trials for young black men killed by police violence. I have been the witness of students struggling under the weight of family neglect, addiction, abuse, mental health disorders, and homelessness. And on more than one occasion, death has joined my journey. The work of living, joys and sorrows, side by side.

I have also overseen the start and close of eight years of school. More after-hours board meeting, faculty meetings, department meeting, and PTSA meeting than I can remember. I have navigated four iterations of state and national standardized testing, and developed academic strategies, pedagogical strategies, grading strategies, special education strategies, enrollment and scheduling strategies, alignment strategies, graduation strategies, communication strategies, discipline strategies, and strategies that

will bridge what our students need for now and for the future. I have stewarded the accountability of *No Child Left Behind, The Race to the Top,* and *Every Child Succeeds*. I have held vast quantities of conversations with students, teachers and parents, and answered quantities more phone calls and emails.

These are the human life-world and the systems-world, side by side. They are fragments, like lines of poetry, they point to the landscape of my life and the world of schooling, *but they are not the meaning*. I live between the lines, in the poetic space, attentive to the multiplicity of meanings, where the sparkling moments of human *becoming* intersect with academic skills and content mastery. I wrestle with my own conflicting obligations and desires, to cultivate a living community while being drawn to attend to all the functional needs of school. Is there a dividing line? *What is of most worth*? To me? To my school? To the larger city in which we reside? To the curriculum as community building?

Pressures and Freedoms: An Autobiographical Story

On this winter morning I will have two conversations. We will sit together, on the loveseat in my office, the warm sunlight shining through the windows even though it is bitter cold outside. Neither visitor will have something hot to drink, tea or coffee, though I offer it. There are three stories to tell, one is my own; the others belong to a mother and a student. A beautiful winter morning and me, as witness, to the complicated conversation and the poetic space.

It is nearing the end of first hour. She wants to see me. I have seen her before. Her son has a chronic attendance problem, late or absent in excess and calling into question whether he may lose credit for non-attendance. We have discussed the problems

and planned solutions and there has been progress; but on this morning the efforts fell apart badly and she wants to see me. She has come repentantly before, when they have arrived a few minutes late, so I was expecting the same: a few excuses, her remorse and promises, my encouragement to keep up with their efforts.

Instead, she sat on the loveseat in fleece pajama bottoms and a tie-died t-shirt, untied tennis shoes with the heels squashed flat. Her hair was wild and bed scruffy. The dark under her eyes and under her fingernails hinted at other stories.

She tells me, "I don't know what to do…I'm so scared. He is so smart. He took a bunch of tests in elementary school…everything comes so easy for him…but now…. I want to help…but his step dad… my responsibility…he gets mad…I just want him to make something of himself…he's so smart." Her story rides the current downstream hitting waves of fear, anger, despair, pride, and longing.

We sit in the sunlight pouring through my wall of windows. And while she talks and cries, I think -- *She needs tools and strategies. Her son needs graduation credits and better attendance. They all need counseling and connections to community services for family support. Her son needs mentoring to learn responsibility and ownership for his future. She needs…he needs…*

I don't say any of those things, we talk instead about promise, about dreams for our kids, hers and mine, about how to help them discover who they are becoming and the amazing lives they can build for themselves. We talked about the surprises of disappointments in ourselves, our marriages, our kids. We talked about growth and change, and my life journey and hers, the middle of the course we are running, and a young man's journey that is still so close to the starting gate that we really can't call the

race yet. We talked about the bumpiness of the road and how hard it is to fight for relationships and communication instead of fighting about the million other teenage skirmishes that are possible. We talked about the scariest things out there, the dropping-out, the walking away, the selling out, the what-ifs that keep moms awake at night. We named them and then we imagined how we might journey beyond such terrors. What promises and dreams might still grow beyond such a frightening place, how the road might bend and turn and take us to places we cannot yet imagine or hope for. And once we had looked that demon in the eye, she asked me to talk about tools and strategies, about counseling and social supports and mentoring.

Just before lunch a second conversation, this one with a student. He really doesn't want to see me. I have seen him before. He struggles with drug use and the school discipline policy required that I suspend him for the second time for bringing marijuana to school. We have discussed the challenges and planned solutions and there has been progress; but this morning the efforts fell apart badly. This isn't a conversation either of us want to have.

When he arrives, he lays his name-brand jacket and backpack on the loveseat next to him. He runs his fingers through his neatly trimmed hair and the sun glints on his earring. He crosses his legs and fidgets with the laces.

He tells me, "I don't know what to do…I'm really confused. I know I'm smart. I took a bunch of tests in elementary school…my mom says everything comes easy for me...but now... I am always angry…I don't know where I'm going…frustrated… divorce, and just when I thought things were better… trying harder doesn't help…make

something of myself…but none of this seems to matter." His story rides the current downstream hitting waves of resentment, wounding, hope, and longing.

We sit in the sunlight pouring through my wall of windows. And while he talks and cries, I think -- *He needs. His parents need…all the needs.* Instead, just as earlier that same morning in another conversation, we talk about promises and dreams, the waking and sleeping terrors that haunt the journey of our lives, and the mercies of struggling through the dense woods of life in such a way that we never lose sight of one another. The hope in dark times, and the light that can surprise us if we train our eyes to look for it. I suspend him for some number of days. We both have tears in our eyes. He hugs me on the way out the door and says, thank you.

Held in my sun-filled office, these two conversations hummed with the poetic possibilities and the curriculum as community building. These complicated conversations reflect the lived experiences of curriculum, the generative and nutritive possibilities of intersectionality and interconnectedness, the tensions and complexity of human being and becoming, and the need to bridge the chasm of our strangeness and difference in order for new forms of relationality, togetherness and community to be formed. I am the hostess, the mother. I offer tea, and a loveseat, and sunshine. The conversations have different purposes, but they are both seeking a hospitable time and place: sustenance, assistance, refuge, and compassion. In the poetic space of those two conversations, we could have developed strategies and plans of accountability. But I imagined new possibilities, a conversation of becoming, of interconnected journeys, of shared stories of hopes and fears, the gifts and works of the body, the circle of emergent time and space and place, where through responsibility and love and nonviolence relationality surprises us, where

we glimpse potentials beyond the probable (Greene, 1997), and all of this - not just for their sake, *but for mine as well.*

In this poetic space I embrace the *curriculum-as-desire*. More than anything, this mom or that student, they want to tell, to hear, to be seen, to believe that they are not alone. They want a companion for the road, a fellow pilgrim, someone at school who will run the course, the curriculum, with them – the curriculum that is not plan, but the curriculum that is complicated conversation and difficult lived experiences, and the curriculum that invites us all into interconnectedness, compassion, responsibility, relationality, and community.

In this poetic space I re-imagine us in kinship, the possibility of one mother standing beside another, or the possibility of one principal and one student, standing outside of the door knocking together and asking for welcome, having traveled far on the road, I imagine us talking together while we wait for the door to open.

Compassion

If we are to participate in relationality, our work is to become carriers of this perpetual invitation and welcome, as well as those who respond with courage to the invitation from the unknown Other. To engage relationally requires apprehending, encountering, pursuing and persisting in the work of seeking what Chinnery (2006) calls a "kinship of compassion" (p. 333). As I highlighted earlier in this chapter, Chinnery (2006) believes that "compassion rests...on the capacity to live with the unexpected and unknown, to live with the radically other without attempting to annihilate or overcome otherness by seeking in the stranger some version of ourselves" (p. 335). This way of understanding compassion is not easy nor is it Pollyannaish, but remember, as I discussed

in detail in chapter four, compassion means to suffer with, and as such, any relationships, that we hope to build are always contextualized by tension, pressure, difficulty and suffering, even as they may move us towards expressions of belonging, kinships and community. In this way, compassion is the persistent labor to make time and space within ourselves and the world in which we can wrestle with relationality, "to suffer...the tension of not knowing who they/we are" (Chinnery, 2006, p. 336), but to nevertheless invite and welcome the stranger in. Chinnery (2006) goes on to explain, "it is precisely the capacity to receive the other as other, to resist the impulse to reduce the other to the same, and to take that demanding path together, I suggest, that allows for the possibility of community without identity" (p. 336). I take her to mean that compassion is the difficult work of recognizing, honoring and inviting difference into relationship. Through compassion we are enabled to reimagine community inclusive of a nourishing difference, which engages in a reciprocal rehumanization (Nagler, 2004). This rehumanization through a compassionate relationship with the other enacts what Volf (1996) describes as a "reciprocal self-donation" (p. 26), where both strangers elect to give of themselves for the sake for the other. Compassion seen from this perspective is far from passive, instead it is revolutionary work. It is the work that allowed Mother Teresa to alter the landscape of the ill, impoverished and illiterate in India, and leads others to cultivate nonviolence and political activism, as seen through the work of Patrisse Khan-Cullors, one of the three women who founded Black Lives Matter, a nonviolent resistance movement initiated out of love. King acknowledged that nonviolence requires a willingness to suffer in recognition of the other's oppression and perhaps in the nonviolent labor to liberate the Other. I believe that Mother Teresa, Leymah Ghowee, Rosa Parks, Jane Addams, and

Patrisse Khan-Cullors would agree with King's (1963) belief, that "unearned suffering is redemptive" (para. 10), because the active response of compassion through the labor of suffering with the other produces a transformation within the self and for the sake of the other.

Responsibility

In Martin Luther King's last speech before his assassination, he reflected upon the biblical narrative of the good Samaritan and challenged his audience to "develop a kind of dangerous unselfishness" (1968, para. 39). The story tells of an injured man who had been attacked by thieves on the road to Jericho. Several people pass by the injured man before the Samaritan finally stops to provide help. King draws upon his own visit to Jerusalem and traveling down the road to Jericho as part of his reflection on the biblical narrative. King (1968) explained,

> I can see why Jesus used this as the setting for his parable. It's a winding, meandering road. It's really conducive for ambushing. You start out in Jerusalem, which is about 1200 miles — or rather 1200 feet above sea level. And by the time you get down to Jericho, fifteen or twenty minutes later, you're about 2200 feet below sea level. That's a dangerous road. In the days of Jesus it came to be known as the "Bloody Pass." (para. 36)

King (1968) understands the difficult choice the individuals must make to stop and provide help or not as dependent upon each individual weighing the tension between two questions: "If I stop to help this man, what will happen to me?" or the reverse, "If I do not stop to help this man, what will happen to him?" (para. 29). King understood that in the Samaritan choosing to respond to the latter question and prioritizing the perilous

position of the injured stranger, that there was a significant risk to his own safety and well-being. Nevertheless, the Samaritan was compelled to engage in a "dangerous unselfishness" and help the injured stranger.

In this narrative, King recognized that the Samaritan invoked compassion through his willingness to suffer with the injured stranger, but beyond his compassion stands the companion ethic of responsibility. In Biesta's (2004) exploration of the language of responsibility which is central to the formation of the community of those who have nothing in common, he explains that responsibility is simultaneously ethical and political. Biesta (2004) prioritizes the responsibility of each member of the communal body, explaining, "what matters...is what is done, what needs to be done, and what only I can do, is to respond to the stranger, to be responsive and responsible to what the stranger asks of me" (p. 317). In this way, each individual within the communal body must choose to pick up the burden of responsibility for the sake of the stranger.

The emphasis on the burden of responsibility draws upon Caputo's (1993) ethics of obligation, specifically the obligations we have to one another. Caputo (1993) explores the "Latin roots of obligation as the condition of being bound - from the verb *ligare*. Caputo explains that obligations happen, not of our own choosing, but by being called by the other" (Carson, 2014, p. 140). Like a tendon or ligament within the body that connects one bone to the other, responding to the movements and needs of the other, obligation suggests the always-already interconnectedness of our humanity and the responsibility that exists between members of the communal body.

The relationship with the other that leads to the formation of community emerges out of this joint ethical engagement of compassion and responsibility. According to

Carson (2014), "we do not make communities; we cannot simply will them into existence. Rather, community happens as a result of obligation and how we respond to these obligations" (p. 140). Through Carson's argument I recognize with greater clarity the interweaving of compassion, responsibility, and relationality. That through compassion and responsibility I am moved to respond to the other and engage with the other, two intertwined actions that together lead to the possibility of relationality. Biesta (2004) speaks to this "emancipatory possibility…[of] our membership of a different community...where we are strangers for each other" (p. 315). Expanding beyond Biesta's statement, my interpretation of relationality resists a conceptualization of relationality emerging from a foundation of individuals where we are *each* a stranger for the other, where the relational is larger and more complex than the addition of individuals. Because the nature of relationality determines what kind of community is possible, I contend that all members of the communal body are not separate as we conceive of them through a western individualistic lens, but instead as always-already interconnected members of a communal body, as in the metaphoric mother and unborn child hidden within the womb.

When members of the communal body act in compassion and responsibility in a multi-directional exchange, our strangeness for each other is mutually supportive, nurturing and freeing the Other, and freeing myself. This emancipatory work of compassion and responsibility is perhaps akin to Freire's (1970) concept of the emancipatory potential of a love-motivated education, wherein the call of the oppressed illuminates the obligation, the *ligare*, of interconnectedness, and challenges us to pick up what Ziarek (2001) suggests is our "infinite responsibility for justice without the assurance of normative criteria" (p. 6). That through the works of love in and through the

body, we come to enact compassionate responsibility for the emancipation of both the stranger and ourselves.

Within the context of emancipation, I believe that neither compassion nor responsibility can be romanticized or diminished as simplistic tasks. Instead, the other community comes into being through the strenuous labor of relationality in which each member of the communal body engages in emancipatory love and the continual labor of nonviolence, compassion, and responsibility. The outcome of this work is the difficult relationship with the Other forged from the desire for human community rather than dismemberment. This is strenuous, ongoing work that chases after the *not yet* of the other community, and our democracy yet to come (Derrida, 1997).

Democracy and Integrative Good

The pursuit of relationality with and through difference is vigorous labor in the service of transformative encounters within ourselves and with others. This transformation of self and other seeks to reinvigorate human embodied times and spaces for the sake of reimagining community where all individuals are invited, welcomed, and find their contributory belonging. Parker Palmer (1983) believes that,

> we live in a culture of brokenness and fragmentation. Images of individualism and autonomy are far more compelling to us than visions of unity, and the fabric of relatedness seems dangerously threadbare and frayed...We have all but lost the vision of the public [understood as] our oneness, our unity, our interdependence upon one another. (p. 19-20)

It is my suggestion that the efforts to cultivate relationality do not emerge from our singular, or individualistic efforts to connect with the other, but a reanimation of our

awareness of the ways in which our intersectional and dynamic relationality may ultimately serve the communal body, the common good, the commonwealth, and the yet to be realized democracy as the still unfinished work of the people. This work cannot be individualistic, but must be interrelational. The labor of relationality, after all, is the effort "to overcome our separateness, to leave the prison of our aloneness" (Fromm, 1956, as cited in Quinn, 2014, p. 131) for the sake of something creative, generative, reconciliatory, and emancipatory.

I find I must be intentional to resist either conventional or romanticized notions of democracy and the sentiments evoked by the language of the commonwealth. On one hand these ideas emerge in our collective imagination in democracy as individualistic, as in one-voice-one-vote. For as Boyte (1984), reminds me, "the vocabulary of the commonwealth...symbolizes a public sphere which simultaneously reflects and reinforces the virtues of individual citizens, joined in communities conscious of their moral interdependence" (p. 13). While this image of democracy leans decidedly towards interconnectivity, it is framed upon the addition of individuals rather than webs of interconnected relationality. On the other hand, the nature of democracy may be seen through a different lens, as it was by Jane Addams, as the living work of social interaction, inclusive advancement, and moral commitment and relationality. Addams believed that the lives of all people are inseparably linked to one another through a dynamic and organic relationality and that democracy should be the companionable and brotherly outworking of this interconnectedness for all of its citizens (Knight, 2010). It is within this framework that Addams (1893) explains that "the good we secure for ourselves is precarious and uncertain… until it is secured for all of us and incorporated

into our common life" (p.7). This conceptualization of democracy and the common good – insists upon the integrative and interconnectedness of civic labor, and clearly illustrates how individualistic efforts are ultimately unsustainable.

I am simultaneously drawn to the noblest, though unfinished, ideals of democracy, and the poetic imagery of a moral city on a hill, all the while acknowledging that these images also speak to complicated intersectionality, the knots and loose ends, as it were, of familiarity and difference, safety and threat; and of hopes for future welcome, emancipation, and freedom enmeshed with past and present traumas - genocide, oppression, and marginalization.

It is this tension of past, present, and future that causes me to agree with Boyte (1984), that no matter our ignobility and incompleteness, "the values of living communities [are] the very ground of freedom and human dignity" (p. 124). I believe that the complicated effort to reimagine both what we believe community to be, as well as to reimagine the ways in which community building may come into being, that these two intertwined complicated conversations are central to the transformation and emancipatory ground which the future democracy has any hope of being built.

The choice to pursue relationality for the sake of the community yet to come means that each of us must choose, again and again and again, to take up what Ziarek (2001) describes as "the difficult role of responsibility and freedom in democratic struggles" (p. 2). The choice to pursue relationality for the sake of the democracy yet to come (Derrida, 1997) also means that we recognize the subtle but nevertheless nefarious obstacles to the cultivation of the common good. For as Boyte (1984) reminds us, the "consciousness of the commonwealth, no matter how serious and creative, is no antidote

to the lure of affluence, the momentum of technology, or the dynamic of the marketplace" (p. 187). In the more than 30 years since Boyte expressed these concerns, the threats of technology and the market place continue to grow, becoming two of our gravest issues in our contemporary moment. Whatever dreams of the other community and the yet unfinished work of our future democracy we may hold in our shared imagination, we must continuously acknowledge not only the exclusionary forces which resist the indwelling of difference, but those social and economic forces which prioritize the benefits to the self over the suffering of others. King's (1968) admonition for each of us to own and enact our "dangerous unselfishness" (para. 39) is the responsibility to engage the overlapping continuum of our personal and public lived experiences such that the struggle for relationships with the other may bring about the emergence of the *beloved community,* a democracy of brotherhood and sisterhood inclusive of difference for the sake of our collective futures.

Reconciliation and the Curriculum that Desires

Relationality from a poststructural perspective is problematic and perhaps at times even appears contrary to our aims of community building. Rather than harmony and balance, relationality in the poststructural framework cannot fully reconcile the fragmentation, ruptures, complexities, tensions, and instabilities. Earlier in this chapter I suggested that before we can reimagine curriculum as community building, we must first recognize curriculum-as-desire, the desire for human communal relationships which do not require assimilation or exclusion of difference. I contend that the desire for communal relationality may be awakened in small locatable times and spaces of embodied

engagement with others, when we encounter artifacts of our once-upon-a-time always-already interconnectedness.

Like an archeologist who glimpses something of herself in the illustrated surface of an ornamental vase from a time and place and culture not her own, we may also encounter moments of emergence where we may glimpse interconnectedness in the eyes of the stranger. The classroom may become this field in which we labor, teacher and students together, with texts and pedagogy, and curriculum – the field of discovery where we may be surprised by the emergence of community. And perhaps once tasted, teachers and students may find that their desire for such interconnected relationality has been piqued, and they yearn for more. Teachers and students together, who know the aroma of community, who hunger after it, may become builders themselves, those who open times and spaces for community to emerge, whose gifts and works of the body enact compassion and responsibility and give birth to encounters with the other community, in the many other classrooms they occupy and within the world they step into outside of the schoolhouse. This is not work any one of us can do alone, it is always-already shared labor, shared desire, shared hope.

I suggest that in these tumultuous times, we are seeking community and experiences of life together - more than that, we are craving it. I suggest that we may grow the desire for human relationships, as we grow all other desires, by first tasting it and yearning for more. Thus, once encountering the other community in contexts of human difference, we may find ourselves drawn to the uncommon flame that generates surprising warmth. Such desire suggests that it is possible to pursue the *beloved*

community in spite of our differences and for the sake of our differences. Such desire suggests that we may, all of us, become the builders of the other community.

King (1957) pronounces, "the end is reconciliation; the end is redemption; the end is the creation of the Beloved Community" (as cited in Sunnemark, 2003, p. 190). From his perspective, what we desire is threefold: reconciliation, redemption, and community. These three articulated desires give me pause to question, is it even possible to pursue reconciliation, redemption and community, when poststructuralism posits the fragmentation and instabilities of our social constructions? I wish to suggest that in the desire for reconciliation we do not draw our understanding from ideas of alignment, or a balancing of accounts, or a closure or settling of transactions, but instead that we draw our understanding from reconciliation as a restoration of relationship. In this way, I understand reconciliation as the desire to see relationality as a possibility where it was not a possibility before. It does not whitewash the fragmentation, ruptures, complexities, tensions, and instabilities, but recognizes them and says - nevertheless, the stranger and I are interconnected, and together we have equal share of compassion and responsibility for the freedom of the Other. Again, the words of Tutu (1999), "my humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up, in yours" (p. 31) resonate not with harmony or balance, but with interconnectedness that recognizes compassion and responsibility for self and other that emerges in and through relationality. The South African *Truth and Reconciliation Commission* (TRC) held this very belief, that the act of restoring human relational potential, and the pursuit of a future just democracy was dependent upon the work of reconciliation. Their work of reconciliation was founded in the desire for community yet to come (Derrida, 1997), a community almost impossible to imagine.

As in the three desires named by King, community emerges alongside reconciliation and redemption. Beyond reconciliation which pursues the possibility of relationality, redemption reclaims a possession through an exchange, such that something lost or stolen or given up is retrieved by something else given in return. To repossess the lost item, some debt must be paid, some trade must be made. I suggest that the exchange of suffering, the burden of responsibility, and the cost of relinquishing one's power over the other are required for the redemptive pursuit of the beloved community. Perhaps this is another picture of how sacrifice, *sacer*, is the making of the sacred.

Biesta (2004) is clear, "the other community is not the result of work, it does not come into existence through application of a technique or technology. In this respect the other community can never become a new educational tool or new educational program" (p. 321). We cannot systematize compassion and responsibility, nor can we force others to engage in the labor of reconciliation and hope to achieve our desires of relationality and community. Nevertheless, we can name our desire for the curriculum as community building and open time and space both within and without the school where individuals may encounter others and the possibilities of transformational relationships with the other. As school leaders we can courageously engage in nonviolent resistance to the regimes of power that constrict the vision of the curriculum. As school leaders we can engage in creative, emancipatory action and shield our teachers from the oppressive forces of data accountability and delimiting standardizations. As school leaders we can tell new stories of interconnectedness, live as representatives of embodied relationality, and speak the words of welcome and invitation thereby giving permission and encouragement for the curriculum to be reimagined, no longer in service to the

marketplace, but for the purposeful reimagination of our communal life and the future of democracy which may serve our oneness, our unity, and our interdependence.

Wang (2004) asks the question, "dare we build a school community which strangers/outcasts can join while preserving their own uniqueness?" (p. 122). I answer yes! I believe such a community can be built within a school, and such a community can be built in any context outside the school where teaching and learning occur. If we hold desire for the other community, the community that embraces and honors the generative potential of difference, we must choose the difficult work of cultivating the curriculum as community building, where love, compassion, and responsibility serve as the fountainhead from which acts of nonviolence may emerge in resistance to the lived and existential threats of our time and to challenge the forces that insist upon dehumanization, estrangement, and injustice. If we desire the democracy yet to come (Derrida, 1997) we must dare to build such a community.

CHAPTER VII

REIMAGINING COMMUNITY BUILDING

"Devastation reroutes the heart." (Lewko, 2014, p. 166)

"The person who loves their dream of community will destroy community, but the the person who loves those around them will create community." (Bonhoeffer, 1939)

"That country that does not exist but that he [the stranger] bears in his dreams, and that must indeed be called a beyond." (Kristeva, 1991, p. 5)

Resisting the Tying Off

When we approach the end of any story, we seek closure and resolution. However, in my theoretical exploration I cannot offer a tidy removal of the threads from the loom, nor neat rows of knots where the warp threads have been tied off, nor the precise hemming of the textile's final border. Poststructuralism resists the narrative of summation, and is instead concerned with ongoing movement, continual transformation, and continual exploration of the threads as they are further woven into new patterns. So, in this my final chapter, I hold the tension of the desire to view the finished textile along with the knowledge that my weaving is ongoing and irresolvable. One of my professors suggested, "this is likely the work of a lifetime" (Ed Harris, personal communication,

May 2, 2017), and even now as I begin this conclusion, I do in fact see threads that lead in new directions. Thus, holding this tension of desired closure alongside the insistence of unresolved exploration, what emerges is to offer a snapshot of the weaving accomplished thus far, knowing that it is a project in perceptual development. What follows therefore in this closing chapter, is my consideration of four threads: the contextualized significance of my theoretical exploration, a vivid depiction of curriculum as community building, an autobiographical narrative of my own transformation, and a consideration of invitation. It is my hope that through these four threads I may capture an image of the temporary resting point, my momentary snapshot of the ongoing weaving, and the continuing complicated journey of exploration.

At a Time, Such as This

Interwoven in the previous six chapters have been descriptions of the challenges and difficulties of our contemporary historical moment, both in the United States and in global intersecting movements – challenges and difficulties that suggest my exploration of community building is timely. In our present moment we find ourselves mired in the lived experiences of social, political, educational, and personal isolation, insecurity, distrust, fragmentation, inequity, marginalization, violence, selfishness, and self-protectionism. We live in polarizing and unstable times producing now all too familiar experiences of fear, anger, threat, and the chaos of suspicion and distrust. The dehumanizing machine of technology, the inequities of the marketplace, and the erosion of human interconnection and experiences of togetherness further magnifies our experiences of estrangement from others and from our world. For many, these tangible and perceived burdens signify more than ever our need for community and for lived

experiences of mutually sustaining life together. However, given our awareness of fragmentation and our human expressions of profound human difference, traditional conceptions of community are restrictive, exclusionary, and homogenizing, thus newer images of community are needed and new ways of imagining community building are timely and relevant if we are to discover ways of honoring difference and valuing the nurturing power of difference to bring sustainability to our new endeavors of community making.

Within this difficult context, the purpose of my theoretical exploration has been to tell a narrative of hope, of light in dark times, and to make visible a different vision of community and new imaginations of how we may engage the work of building community. Rather than understanding community through organizational, structural, or instrumental frameworks, or through power dynamics, political or social action, my aim has been to consider community through the lens of relationality which may emerge within the curriculum. Additionally, rather than conceiving of community as defined by human similarity, affinity, or assimilation, my aim has been to reimagine community as something comprised of and sustained through the nurturing embrace and preservation of difference for the sake of community - the other community.

In situating my theoretical exploration of community and community building at the intersection of poststructural feminism, autobiography, and poetics my aim has been to illuminate the complexity that exists in how we make meaning of our lived experiences as well as our being and our becoming as they are situated within the curriculum. Poststructural feminism, narratives of the self, and poetics may open new multifaceted spaces and instruct us on how to listen deeply, to see anew, to share ourselves in story

through the complexity of language, to glimpse different interpretations, and recognize ourselves in the reflected surface of difference. All of these lenses challenge our contemporary social and political moment which rely heavily upon confrontation, debate, positionality, argument, and being "right," offering us instead a complicated lens of possibility, intersection, multiplicity, and interweaving. I suggest as well that the complicated lenses of self-narrative and poetics may be significant for the same reasons that art is significant - that it gives us a way to understand our lives and our place in the world in new ways, by drawing upon symbols, embodied knowledge, emotions, and aesthetic experience, each of which challenges our perceptions of empirical knowledge through the ineffable truths of beauty.

The poststructural, the autobiographical, acts of deconstruction and the poetic provide spaces of subversion, such that in the tension, juxtaposition, and multiplicity of meaning making we may approach seeing and apprehending in new ways. Through these intersecting lenses we recognize the complication, the unresolvable, and the imaginative question: *is it like this*? Such lenses afford us new potentials and new ways to imagine our work of building community.

Curriculum is Found at the Intersection of the Self and the World

Grumet (1988) suggests that "curriculum is a moving form. That is why we have trouble capturing it, fixing it into language, lodging it in our matrix" (p. 172). Acknowledging the complexity Grumet describes, I too recognize that my theoretical exploration of curriculum as community building is difficult to fix into language, however, it is not idle dreaming, but rather an intentional labor which emerges through

complicated conversation and lived experience - *the experience I am living into.*

Reimagining Curriculum as Community Building

**Curriculum is the living ecosystem in which community building may emerge*

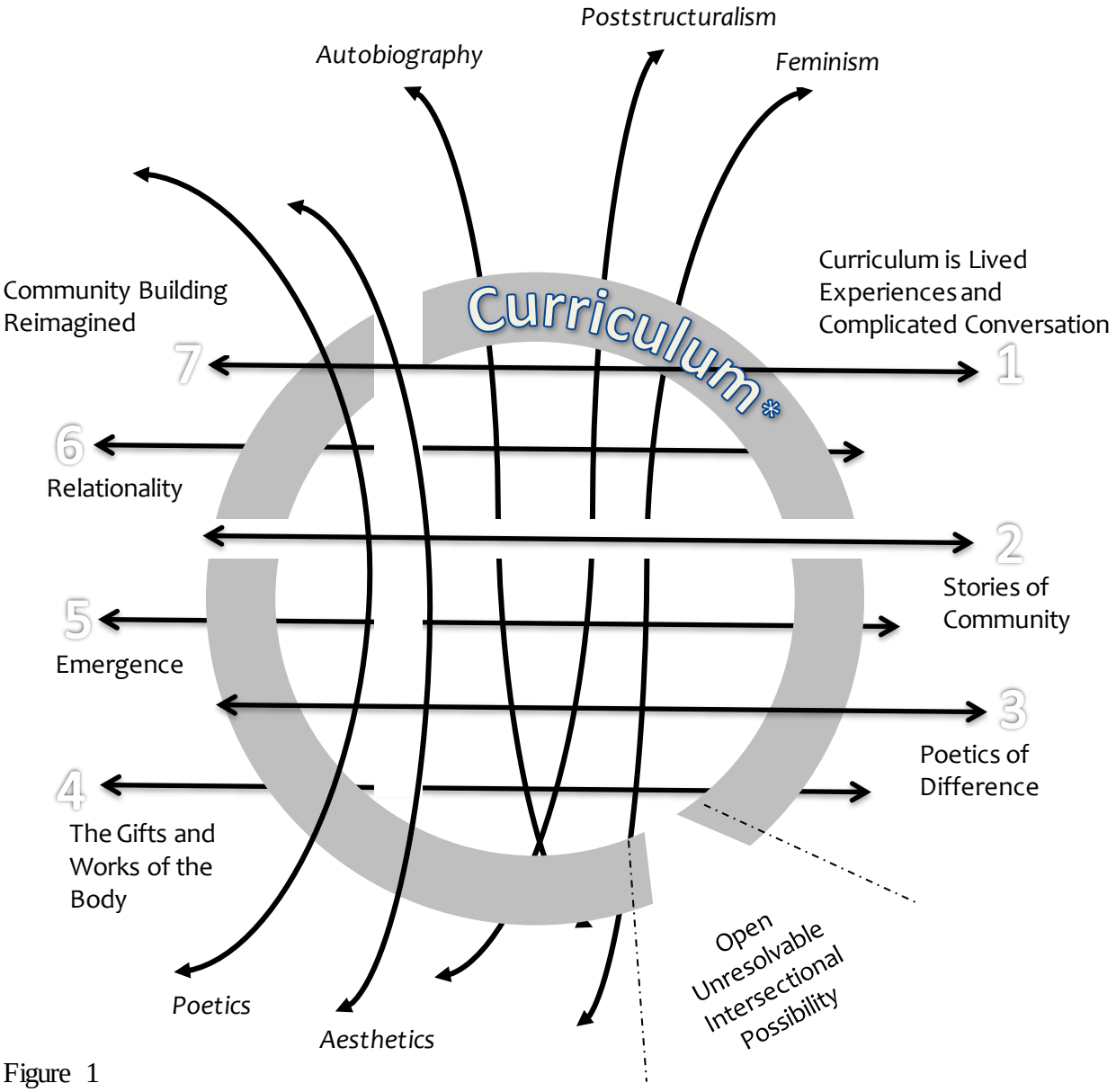

Figure 1

In order to provide as best as I can a vivid snapshot, my temporary landing point, of curriculum as community building, I draw upon real world examples as illustrations of how the curriculum serves as the ecosystem or topography in which community building may emerge. My endeavor is to depict the dynamic movement that Aoki pursued in the "curriculum beyond plan, to [the] curriculum as an active unfolding of the course of life" (Carson, 2014, p. 139) where we may recognize our "self-knowledge and collective witnessing [which] are complementary projects of self-mobilization for social reconstruction" (Pinar, 2004, p. 37).

As I work to capture the image of the curriculum as community building, a number of questions arise for me, questions that can be extended to teachers, students, school leaders, and those that cross the imaginary boundary lines between the school building and the outside world. How might I see the curriculum not as standards, projects, goals, targets, readings, questions, discussions and all of the prescriptive elements that design a course-to-be-run, but instead conceptualize the *curriculum as desire*, and see the curriculum as open spaces for the emerging course-I-am-running, and thereby attend to my self-transformation and the possibility of relationality? How might I pursue moments of emergence and cultivate the holding open of time, and space, and place in which I might recognize myself as both hostess and as stranger? How might I engage the works and gifts of the body that may lead to compassion, responsibility, and interdependence? How might my *curriculum as desire* - to see community emerge - allow me to reimagine the always-already interconnections of an ecosystem, such that I might engage in the labor of community building, not through process, or objective, or methodology, but through the invitation to pursue self-transformation and relationality?

Pinar (2004) contends that beyond a narrow and instrumental view of the curriculum, the reconceptualized curriculum is the always-already interconnected labor of personal and social reconstruction, and that through the lived experience of "education we invite one another to risk 'living at the edge of their skin,' where we find the greatest hope of revisioning ourselves" (Boler, 1999, p. 200, as cited by Pinar, 2004, p. 249). Curriculum understood this way is embodied and enacted. Thus, to enliven my snapshot of curriculum as community building, I attend to four domains and describe in imaginative language how curriculum as community building may emerge with teachers and students, in text and story, in the classroom and school building, and in the school leader.

Teacher and Students

When I imagine teachers desiring to live into the curriculum as community building as they are preparing the lessons they will soon teach, I imagine them extending their vision beyond the specific lessons, the standards to be met, and facts to be imparted, and to imagine this locatable time and space within the class as an opportunity where experiences of community might emerge. My conversations with such a teacher would be to encourage her to reflect and consider her desire, and her students' desire, for lived experiences of community, and to consider how her lived experiences and those of her students find their place within the curriculum, and to imagine the curriculum as the ecosystem or topography in which community might be built.

Recognizing a *curriculum as desire* for community building to emerge, the teacher might attend to the ways in which she and her students together share the role of the hostess as well as the role of the stranger. The teacher might consider how to

carefully protect these tensions, safeguarding opportunities for herself and her students "to claim connection as well as grapple with difference" (Miller, 2005, p. 83). The curriculum as community building acknowledges that beyond the significant facts or narratives embedded in subject matter to which students are exposed, the greater desire is for community inclusive of difference to be built, and some experience of life together to be encountered.

The teacher might recognize the fragility, porousness, and strangeness of our selves, and by positioning herself as one-amongst her students, students and teacher together might come to the communal table with grace for the instability of our narratives and the ways that our inner stranger may build bridges of connection with others who are also strangers around the table. The teacher might enable her students to consider their embodied experiences that bring meaning, and confusion, and complication to the exploration of these difficult subject matters. She might enable her students to consider the gifts and works of their bodies, students and teacher together, to practice opening themselves to the uncomfortable space of transformation that may occur when we open the womb-like spaces of our eyes, ears and mouth - when we attend to the ways in which our loving glances, deep listening, and multiplicity of voices make visible the unknown other and make us visible to ourselves.

The teacher might engage the curriculum as community building by acknowledging lived experiences of fragmentation, resistance, and the desires of some for elective non-belonging. In so doing the teacher might explore how to communicate her valuing and prioritizing the mysteriously-sacred being and becoming of her self and her students, such that all responses to belonging are honored. To this end, the teacher

might cultivate embodied opportunities in which responsibility and compassion may be encountered and shared, leading to emancipatory experiences, reflection, and actions that promote social reconstruction and the cultivation of togetherness, or other generative reimaginings of elective nonbelonging.

The teacher might also position all of her labors and her students labors within the contextualized understanding that we are all *always-already* interconnected and that community building is the labor of revealing this web of interconnectivity rather than individuals each doing their small piece and adding these works together to form something - this latter version contradicts our embeddedness within the ecosystem or landscape of the curriculum where our becoming is intrinsically tied to the becoming of others.

Text and Story

In this snapshot of curriculum as community building, I am not so much concerned with the prescribed texts and resources most-often provided by the district approved curriculum plan that teachers are required to follow. Instead I am attentive to how these texts, textbooks, primary documents, and autobiographical narratives of teacher and students which may be invited into the classroom may open times and spaces in which we may witness the emergence of lived experiences of relationality and encounters with community inclusive of difference.

In our era of rigid external controls of education, it is uncommon for teachers to have freedom to select their texts, thus a teacher utilizing the provided list of materials and standards required for her class or content area is a familiar framework in which to craft a space for the curriculum as community building to emerge. In this regard, the

attention of the teacher may not be the selection of *what* is taught in the curriculum as planned (by someone else), but instead my encouragement to the teacher is to attend to the curriculum as she lives it with her students, thus considering how she and students together are running the race, how their being and becoming is invited into the space of the text, transformed by the text, and moved by the text toward relationship and action.

The teacher who engages the course materials, whatever they may be: historical documents, scientific articles, mathematical theories, literature, or difficult and estranging texts, might imagine how to craft spaces of listening and spaces of telling, and consider how to hold time open for that which is worth whiling. She might be mindful of how the students assemble around the texts, and be attentive to the embodiment of reading, and the difficulty of reading as an educative act. The teacher might anticipate and prepare for the surprising moments of visceral reaction to all manner of texts, knowing that lived and embodied experiences with texts may evoke joy, tears of sorrow, expressions of rage, frustration at perceived purposelessness, discomfort over privilege and marginalization, powerlessness over ongoing injustice, and the ignobility of our shared history in which we may see ourselves as victims or as somehow complicit. Such a teacher might craft spaces of sanctuary for students to read these texts and to hold the sacredness of suffering with one another, knowing that these rocky places may not be smoothed over. Such a teacher might open complicated conversations about how we embody and enact compassion, responsibility, love, emancipation, and reconciliation. Such an open space might invite students to share self-narratives that illuminate the interconnectedness as well as the breaking points of our lives together within the classroom and in the larger

circle of our lives in the world. This work is very difficult to practice. It requires courage, fortitude, patience, and teacher practices of self-care in order to persevere.

The teacher might recognize the difficulty embedded within all texts (even those that appear straightforward) and endeavor to protect the time and space of engagement to honor complexity and vulnerability, and to preserve space for those who have experienced marginalization and silencing to express their narratives. The teacher might adjust her positional power in the classroom, becoming a listener, a careful carrier of other's words so as to embody and enact a challenge to the perceived authority of grand narratives and singular interpretations. She might empower her students with the ability to approach "the careful teasing out of warring forces of signification within the text itself" (Leggo, 1998, p. 187). She might also promote the inclusion of autobiographies of lived experiences that tie teachers and students to the historic past and aid her students not only in creating alternate texts but in exposing the multiplicity and intersectionality of memory that both expands and contracts - recognizing that curricula, memory, and autobiography are "sites of permanent openness and resignifiability" (Miller, 2005, p. 219). Such efforts resist oppressive forces embedded in educational systems and in classroom traditions, cultivating emancipatory experiences for students, as well as teachers.

Teachers might consider as well how to cross the artificial boundaries of subject disciplines, and how complex, nuanced and difficult texts may infuse classes in science, math, history, language, civics/government, psychology, religion, art, and music with contextualized narratives and lived experiences. Teachers who acknowledge the intersectionality of social, political, and economic structures, may allow for the crafting

of time and space to reshape contexts in which students and teachers may together unlearn and teach anew, cultivating fresh wonder and new awareness of interconnection in which transformation may emerge. Such cross-curricular explorations, by their very nature, illuminate and elevate difference and cultivate lived experiences in which difference and complexity is understood as nurturing and sustaining to community.

Classroom and School Building

In creating and holding open time and space for the students' engagement with the text, with themselves, and with one another, the teacher cultivates an appreciation that "we are living stories, always, all ways, caught up in swirling stories" (Leggo, 2018, p.87). I would encourage teachers to grow in their awareness of how our storied lives intersect with the physical space of the classroom as well as the social space of interaction among students and with the teacher. Far more than walls and windows, desks, chairs, and tables, the classroom may be reimagined through the curriculum as community building, and reconfigured as a space where communal relationality may emerge.

As the teacher reimagines the curriculum as community building, she might consider the physical arrangement of the classroom, observing how students are able to interact and engage in the gifts and works of the body. I would encourage her to observe her students and consider if they may have the possibility of embodied experiences of loving glances, deep listening, or the telling of stories, and then adjust the physical space of the classroom to support the emergence of such lived experiences. She might also consider that embodied closeness and physical proximity may cause discomfort for some, thus without smoothing over difference, the teacher may consider the difficulties of

togetherness and craft physical spaces within the room for elective self-removal from the communal environment in order to protect elective non-belonging in such a way that these times of elective separation may also become generative of students' being and becoming, as well as nurturing to the communal body. Holding this physical and relational tension within the classroom space is very difficult to practice.

Understanding the perceived threat of difference to the formation of community, as well as the perceived risks of relationality, the teacher might recognize in the curriculum as community building her need to facilitate the potential for students to encounter the Other and to recognize their mutually shared strangeness and difference, and in so doing approach new understandings of difference *for* community (Hershock, 2012). Both physical and instructional spaces might be opened and time set aside, and like the observance of Advent or the Sabbath, both teachers and students might explore symbolic ways to light candles, to embody and enact invitation, and welcome others into a time and space of anticipation, where all members of the classroom together might have the opportunity to encounter our shared humanity, the sacredness of our being and becoming, endeavoring to "see ourselves in kinship" (Boyle, 2017). Such anticipatory spaces can be formed within the classroom, where teachers and students together begin to approach the *Thou* of the Other (Buber, 1937), even as they hold the tension of the unknown, and struggle to overcome their fears of difference, and the knowledge that it is a difficult labor to see kinship in every man.

Just as my lived experience is contextualized in the city of Tulsa, Oklahoma, the curriculum as community building recognizes and honors the complexity of place and the characteristics that define it. Curriculum as community building emerges in each and

every localized place and considers the distinct geographic, physical, political, economic, and other socially constructed narratives that circumscribe the classroom and the school building. In the physical space of the classroom and the school building, teachers and students may together begin to recognize something of the communal body, glimpsing how they "may be knit together as one body" (Winthrop, 1633), and through patient practices of nonviolence, students and teachers may find themselves stirred towards active responses to violence, oppression and injustice that seep in through the porous walls between the world and the classroom, and discover ways to build bridges to the world beyond the school building. In this way the world outside and world inside the school building may intermingle, expanding and adding greater dimension to the experiences of interconnection, heart unity, and the communal body. Such bridging of worlds, intersections of spaces, and intermingling of voices invites teachers and students to consider in new ways the possible "communal ethic" that Jane Addams understood "as critical to democracy" (Hendry, 2011, p. 167), and to find emergent moments of apprehending new embodied possibilities for the democracy yet to come (Derrida, 1992).

In the curriculum as community building teachers and students might become attentive to the spaces we want to inhabit together, co-creating spaces of sanctuary and refuge, recognizing how "the classroom becomes simultaneously a civic square and a room of one's own" (Pinar, 2004, p. 38). In these ways, and in many others as they may be created by teachers in their own locations, the curriculum as community building sees the classroom as the space which enables and encourages lived and embodied enactments that both anticipate the horizon, and the moment of emergence, where transformation and relationality may arrive.

School Leader

The school leader, perhaps more than any other member of the school, might find themselves challenged by the curriculum as community building to imagine ways to actively resist instrumental, comparative, and market-oriented values of education. The school leader might struggle against the constricting measurable outcomes of standardization and accountability data in favor of transformative encounters, interconnection, and relationality. This labor to enable community building to emerge requires the school leader to disrupt and complicate power structures and patriarchal authority mechanisms embedded in the institutionalization of education and in the external control strategies that objectify and dehumanize teachers and students. Thus, the school leader who encourages her teachers to bravely reimagine the curriculum as community building might also consider how the power structures within the school institution are open or closed to transformative and relational potential and explore ways of illuminating and crossing these boundary lines in complicated conversation.

The curriculum as community building when seen as a vast and intricate ecosystem, might encourage the school leader to pursue a posture of nurturance and care-giving, similar to maternity, rather than pursuing a posture of governance and legalism, in order to cultivate and grow the dynamic organism of the curriculum. Like a symbolic hostess or symbolic mother, the school leader might embody a hospitable vision, one that is welcoming, generative, and sustaining. Such a vision is difficult and calls upon the leader to occupy a space of tension, for the labor of giving birth to a school in which compassion, responsibility, reconciliation, transformation and intersectional relationality

have the possibility of emerging is arduous, destabilizing and messy human work. Furthermore, the demanding pressures of accountability, standardization, and measurement challenge this generative work, often standing in direct opposition to her efforts. Choosing to resist these external forces may have significant repercussions and responding to these pressures requires creativity, humility, and wisdom.

The school leader who seeks to engage the curriculum as community building in their real-world context might seek ways of nurturing hope and belief in the lived experiences of those who share the labor of schooling, that they may become fellow pilgrims, companions of the road - for they will be sorely needed in the traveling towards the community that lies beyond. It is a long and recursive journey fraught with difficulty, skepticism, resistance, and from my experience, self-doubt and despair as well. This is not work that anyone can do alone; it is always-already communal labor.

My Own Transformation

Pinar's (2012) examination of self-formation, or our own becoming, through education shifts the perspective of the curriculum to the verb *currere*. The shift in focus considers the ways in which we are living into the curriculum and how our transformation is always at the point of intersection where we pursue simultaneously "self-understanding and social reconstruction" (p. 44). In the synthetical turn of *currere* which attends to the future journeying and the road ahead, Pinar (2012) reminds me that "the entrance to the future is located in the past "(p. 232). Thus, having made my way to the close of this theoretical exploration, I am attentive not only to the past, but the ways in which the past and the present speak to my future. In this way, one point of significance from my theoretical exploration may well be my examination and

articulation of my own transformation and the labors before me which I glimpse on the horizon. To this end, I share three self-observations that stand at this intersection of self-understanding and social reconstruction (Pinar, 2012).

The Relational Web of Becoming

My theoretical exploration, interwoven as it is with my own autobiography, has moved me to recognize with much greater clarity that my own journey of becoming is enmeshed in the always-already interconnected web of relationships in which I am embedded, as well as within the social, political, and economic contexts and forces that animate the world in which I live. Through my exploration, I have located buried threads which are now visible and speak to my transformation.

My earliest rudimentary thoughts written in my journal before I began this work found their origin in conventional Western patriarchal narratives of community building that springs forth when individual subjects take responsibility to become community builders wherever they find their circle of influence. Through my theoretical exploration, I have been challenged by my earliest vision of community building, and now recognize that such a vision was limited, skewed, and attentive only to single threads within the larger textile. Through the labor of exploration, reflection, academic study, and writing, my vision has been expanded to view the larger textile, the ecosystem, the landscape in which all persons are always-already embedded. And in so doing, I recognize that self-transformation, which may generate compassion, responsibility, and action, is always in dynamic connectivity with relationality. In this way, my transformation depends upon the interconnectivity inherent within curriculum where all others' journeys of becoming intersect and intertwine.

My transformation depends upon connection; it cannot proceed it. Recognizing my interconnectedness with others is needed for my transformation and my transformation is needed for the emancipation of others, thus, the web of connectivity which always-already exists is the context in which community may be revealed, exposed, brought forth, or emerge. The Other and I are tethered together and inseparable. I depend upon the Other to approach my own self-understanding, while recognizing that my self-understanding is itself fluid and fragmented.

This is a beautiful and unclosable circle of mystery that illuminates a feminist perspective, where the individual cannot build community no matter how much they invest to that end, *but* the individual can open themselves to the Other, engage in the gifts and works of the body, and practice holding open time and space so that the emergence of the communal, of life together, becomes possible. My theoretical exploration has worked this transformation within me, to see with new eyes the "social organism" (Addams, 1902, p. 268) in which we live. It has repositioned my understanding of democracy and the community as social relationships dependent upon the generative and sustaining nurturance of difference.

The Potency of the Poetic

Another element of my transformation that emerges from this theoretical exploration has been an expansion of my understanding of poetics and the value of language to stir the imagination towards change, growth, and action. I have been challenged to look critically at poetics and language beyond my natural affinity for words, metaphors, and symbols, and to consider how poetic exploration and imagination can be powerful tool of transformation and liberation, for myself and for others. I have

come to a lived experience of something akin to Kristeva's (2002) belief that "the culture of words, the narrative and the place it reserves for meditation, seems to me to offer a minimal variant of revolt" (p. 5). In my own struggle for language with which to explore difference, embodiment, emergence, and relationality (to name a few) I have found a space of active resistance to the mechanisms of control that so frequently govern educational studies and which prioritize measurable outcomes and strategies of prescriptive application.

In the space of the poetic, in the play of metaphor, in story making, and memory telling, I have discovered a transformative space for me to see anew, to see my storied self, to see the story of community, and to see the possibility of inviting others to craft their own stories, which together may become emancipatory. What began in some ways as something I imagined as my own journey or pilgrimage has transformed, leaning now towards what Greene (2001) describes as "efforts to free persons …to help them break with passivity or automatism or fear or somnolence" (p. 205) and to create opportunities for others to engage in poetic spaces of imagination and autobiographical self-witnessing which are needed for their transformative work, as much as for my own ongoing transformation. In this space of resistance, emancipation and transformation I see on the horizon of my future labor to "become a voice," as the ancient poet Sappho once wrote.

Holding Open Time and Space is an Act of Resistance

I have also come to understand the powerful wellspring of holding open time and space for the purposes of anticipating the moment of emergence, and how this effort can serve as active, generative, nonviolent resistance to the norms of community building which depend upon conformity, exclusion, or assimilation.

When I began my theoretical exploration, I could see the threads strung upon the loom, but I could not see the way in which the threads would come together. I had an image of the textile, but could not see the patterns that would rise to the surface. In this same way, my conceptualization of the curriculum has also transformed, such that what captures my attention most at this juncture is less about the surface of the textile and more about the infinite number of tiny intersections that form openings, no matter how small, and which appear at every point where thread crosses thread. This is my new vision of the curriculum, as an expansive weaving crafted as much by threads as by spaces, which if we attend to them, if we endeavor to practice holding them open, these spaces may offer infinite opportunities for transformation, relationality, and social-reconstruction.

I have come to see that with great effort, we may train our eyes to find within the curriculum that we are living into, times and spaces that can be held open for the complicated conversations of our own becoming and the becoming of others. This is the work of resistance. It resists the convenient narrative of the curriculum as something orderly, uniform, and standardized. It resists the narrative of the curriculum as attentive to predetermined outcomes. And it resists the narrative of homogeneity, assimilation, and conformity - the forces that contribute to exclusionary communities of *soil* and *blood* and deform democracy as well.

I suggest that in struggling to locate and hold open these spaces within the curriculum that we are living, we may come to recognize the nonviolent emancipatory labor of welcoming the silenced, the marginalized, and the oppressed, (both the stranger within and the stranger without), and in welcoming these voices we may participate

together in the *not yet* community, the emergent community, the other community, and the interconnected circle of community building tied up in our web of transformations and relationships with one another.

The imagery of holding open spaces while hopeful, is also uncomfortable. It echoes Salvio (1999) who warns against a simple "narrative of closure" (p. 185, as cited in Taubman, 2000, p.27). It embraces the restlessness of interruption, continual seeking, tension, juxtaposition, and the crossing of boundaries and borders again and again. I have come to believe "a small space that stretches towards justice" (Fine, 2009, p. 35) may be far more revolutionary than I had ever imagined.

The Labor of Invitation

I find I must agree with Greene (1993) who submits, "all we can do is to speak with others as passionately and eloquently as we can; all we can do is to look into each other's eyes and urge that other on to new beginnings" (p. 230), and if I extend her thought a bit more, all I can do is be open to others who look into my eyes and urge me onward as well. I embrace this powerful admonition and invitation to engage in face-to-face human encounters and storytelling as the way forward, as ripe with promise, and perhaps as the dynamic relational thread in the curriculum as community building - the curriculum which we live into, which transforms us in and through the complexities of intersectional conversations. In this admonition I am empowered to believe that "through my words and actions" (Irwin, 2003, p. 4) I can promote change, not instrumentally and not individually, but by holding myself open in humility and in speaking the poetics of invitation, to invite others and to be invited, again and again, to engage in the

complicated conversation of curriculum, to become companions of the road, and to journey forward together.

Boyte (1984) suggests that community cannot be rescued from the outside, instead "renewal [has] to begin within" (p. 95). In this way, the labor of community building in contexts of profound human difference is always-already internal and communal labor. It is not individualistic labor, but interconnected labor, that through acts of grace I may hold open a space and embody and enact what Kristeva (2002) calls "the 'grace' of working through" (p. 41), and allow myself to be taken in by others while simultaneously opening myself to the other and welcoming them inside. I suggest that within this space of hospitable tension we may "work together to unconceal what is hidden" (Greene, 1995, p.115), to listen for the tuning fork, the rhyme, the verisimilitude, the unfamiliar voice that calls our name, the glance of the stranger's eye that glints with the mysterious possibility of a sustaining life together.

And this is where I rest my shuttle, the threads quiet and still if only for the moment, the textile still in progress on my loom. It is a resting space of mystery, of grace, and an invitation to co-labor. Coles (1990) says, 'we connect with one another, move in and out of one another's lives, teach and heal and affirm one another, across space and time – all of us wanderers, explorers, adventurers, stragglers and ramblers…but now and then as pilgrims" (as cited in Witte-Townsend & Hill, 2005, p. 386). Rather than exiles and those estranged from community, perhaps we might speak the invitation or heed the invitation, you and me, and embark anew in the living curriculum and endeavor to open times and spaces for the other community to emerge.

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2002-2004	Tulsa School of Arts and Sciences English and Art History Instructor
2002-2001	Metro Christian Academy English Instructor
1993-1998	Home School Educational Co-op English and Art Instructor
1990-1993	Casica Hall Preparatory School